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ADVENTURES

OF

THE CONNAUGHT RANGERS.

VOL. I.

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ADVENTURES

OF THE

CONNAUGHT RANGERS,

FROM 1808 TO 1814.

BY

WILLIAM GRATTAN, ESQ.,

LATE LIEUTENANT CONNAUGHT RANGERS.

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Qc

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

I BELIEVE it was Rousseau who said that Prefaces were seldom, if ever, read. I myself do not see any great use in one, but as it is the fashion to say something—by way, I suppose, of telling the reader *why* the Author published at all—I shall merely state that as I sat one evening in company with a friend who had served in India, but who had never been in the Peninsula during our struggle there, he requested me to give him some description of our proceedings in general, but particularly an account of my own regiment, of which he had heard so much. I told him a good many anecdotes, to all of which he paid

great attention. "Can you *write* them," said he, as well as you *tell* them?" I replied that I could not say, as I had never thought of doing so. "Well then," was his answer, "if you write them only *half* as well as you tell them, rely on it they will be read."

I have made the attempt, and the reception which the pages I now present to the public may meet with, will prove whether I was right or wrong in following my friend's advice.

W. G.

ANSWER TO SOME ATTACKS IN "ROBINSON'S LIFE OF PICTON."

THIS writer of the late Sir Thomas Picton's life has shown how very little he understood the subject he wrote upon, and his information, which appears to be principally derived from informants whose names he declines to publish, is so awfully faulty, that he is led into all sorts of errors; and his book, in consequence, assumes more the appearance of a romance than of a history; but he is so witty at the expense of "The Connaught Rangers," that it becomes my duty, as an officer of that corps, and the author of the present work, to notice one or two of his observations.

In attempting to place General Picton in "the next niche to his mighty leader," he makes him appear as one more fitted for a lunatic asylum than the commander of the "fighting division," and in his attempts to brand "The Connaught Rangers" with infamy, he labours hard to gain a verdict from his readers in favour of his being himself placed beside the General in his retirement. An extract or two from the work will give a sample of the entire.

It is well known in the army, that, for four years and upwards, Picton commanded the third division in the Peninsula, and it is as well known that, during this long period, not one officer of the 88th Regiment ever received promotion through his recommendation. Mr. Robinson, it would seem, thinks some sort of excuse should be made for this conduct on the

part of General Picton, and he endeavours to prove that "The Connaught Rangers" were so wretched a body of nearly naked, half-armed adventurers, as to be utterly unworthy of any mark of favour from their General; yet, strange to say, his reproaches, if true—which they are not—would cast a much greater share of blame on his "hero" than on "The Connaught Rangers;" because, if what Mr. Robinson says be correct, General Picton should have reported that regiment as a dangerous one to employ against the enemy, and had he applied to the different French regiments the 88th were opposed to, there is not a shadow of doubt on my mind but that they would have said the same, and pronounced "The Connaught Rangers" to *be* a "dangerous regiment in battle."

In vol. ii., page 127, Mr. Robinson informs us that "one regiment in particular, the 88th, or Connaught Rangers, as brave and steady a fighting set of fellows as ever handled a musket, were perhaps as determined a band of marauders as ever sacked a city or robbed a poultry-yard," &c. &c.

Now there is nothing extraordinary in this. The 88th Regiment, one of the strongest in the army, we are told were "as determined" as their comrades. What of all this? "The Connaught Rangers" would not give a pin's point to be told this, no more than they would to be told they were as loyal to their colours as any other regiment,—for when other corps lost from one hundred to four hundred men by desertion, "The Connaught Rangers" did not lose one man! This it would be no compliment to tell the 88th that it was as loyal as any other corps, any more than it is a disgrace to them to tell them they were *as* great marauders as their neighbours. Had Mr. Robinson told his readers that the 88th were the *most* determined robbers, there would be something exciting in it, but, as it is, he has told us nothing that the army did not know already!

During the war, a British infantry soldier required three years to accomplish his complete discipline, by which time he had cost his country about £88; what an odd number, by the way, as we are speaking of the 88th! Thus, for every soldier who deserts to the enemy, the nation loses the sum I mention. Now, a loss of one hundred men, at £88 per man, would amount to £8,800, and if we state the number of desertions which took place in some regiments at three hundred—I have heard it was nearer to four hundred,—we shall find that the loss to the country amounted to the enormous sum, for one regiment alone, of £26,400! This £26,400 sterling would pay for a larger quantity of poultry than was picked up in the Peninsula by the entire of "the fighting division," so that, supposing the British nation had to pay—which it had not—for that portion which fell to the lot of "The Connaught Rangers," I think Mr. Robinson—as an impartial historian—might, as a *set-off* against the cocks and hens, instead of a *set-to* amongst them, have told of the wonderful attachment and loyalty of "The Connaught Rangers," and omitted the "poultry-yard." It would have been more dignified in him, as the historian of a "Roman hero!" and he might have left the cocks and hens to fight their own battle, and not commenced his "main" against "the fighting division," by "feathering the pit" with "The Connaught Rangers," and trying to out-crow them! *

* Brigade Order.—St. John's, May 19, 1815.

"No men having deserted from the 88th Regiment, they will not be required to attend at Chambly, for the purpose of witnessing the execution of the sentence of a General Court Martial on several deserters."

Brigade Order.—St. John's, May 26, 1815.

"Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane was much pleased this day with the general appearance and movements of the 88th Regiment. He can-

In speaking of the elevation to the peerage of some general officers, amongst whom the name of Picton did not appear, his biographer remarks (vol. ii., page 322), "can it then be a matter of surprise that Sir Thomas Picton, who was greedy of honour, and who was fond of the remark, and often made it, that he never envied any body excepting when he did something great, should now experience a feeling of silent reproach and degradation, when he saw his services passed over, and a decided preference shown to those officers with whom he thought he had at least equal claim?"

Nothing can be more natural than those feelings of Sir Thomas Picton; he must have felt keenly the neglect he met with; but, I wonder if it ever occurred to him or his biographer, that a body of some forty gallant officers, and a battalion of from eight hundred to one thousand devoted soldiers, had any feeling for the neglect and injustice they had all experienced from him during the many years he commanded them? Not one of the gallant men that composed this body, was ever so much as noticed by Picton for good conduct; and it is well known in the army that many deserved it; but, according to his biographer, "Picton had a strong sense of justice!"

In vol. ii., page 314, we find the following:—"The officers of the division exhibited, however, a more substantial but not more convincing proof of the esteem in which they held him; and it will hardly be believed by those who have heard that Sir Thomas Picton never reported the services of any officer

not refrain from expressing how much and how sincerely he regrets losing a regiment with which he has so long served, and which has conducted itself so creditably since its arrival in this country; but he confidently looks forward to have it again in his brigade. The circumstance of the regiment never having lost a man by desertion, is highly honourable to it, and can never be forgotten by the Major-General.

"(Signed,) J. CAMPBELL, Brigade Major."

under his command, or attempted to procure for them any reward, that those very officers whom he is thus accused of having neglected, before the division was broken up, subscribed amongst themselves a sum amounting to nearly £1600, for the purpose of presenting 'Old Picton' with a service of plate," &c., &c.

Whoever said that Sir Thomas Picton "never reported the services of any officer under his command," must be a block-head. Had Picton not recommended "any," then all would have been equally aggrieved, and it is not likely we should have heard any thing of the vote of plate; but not one officer of the 88th having been noticed, much less recommended by Picton, not one officer of that corps subscribed one sixpence towards the purchase of plate for "Old Picton."

One more extract from Mr. Robinson's work, and I have done with him and it:—

Vol. ii., pages 318-20—"But this was not all," added our informant, "for frequently, just before going into battle, it would be found, upon inspection, that one-half of the 88th Regiment were without ammunition, having acquired a pernicious habit of exchanging the cartridges for *aqua ardente*, and substituting in their places pieces of wood, cut and coloured to resemble them."

According to Mr. Robinson, the 88th fought with coloured wood in lieu of powder and ball, yet they invariably defeated their veteran opponents!* Taking it for granted that such was the case, (what a compliment, by the way, Mr. Robinson has unintentionally paid them!) I boldly assert that every officer in that regiment should have been promoted, ay, and promoted so rapidly that their transfer to other corps would have followed as a matter of course, for it would have been contrary

* See Appendix, pp. 323 to 346.

to all military practice to have had one regiment with a superabundance of field-officers and captains, (for, if Mr. Robinson's account be true, the officers should have filled those ranks!) and their initiating the soldiers of the corps they would be transferred to, into the arcana of beating the best troops in the known world with bits of wood, would have considerably eased their new comrades of the burden which, in the shape of lead, they had been wont to carry; would have been a great saving to the British nation, would have stamped themselves as men of unheard-of talent, and would have placed their commander, Sir Thomas Picton—where? Not in the "next niche to his mighty leader." No; not in the "next niche," but far, far above not only him, but above all the heroes of modern as well as of ancient times! This would have been a new species of tactics developed to the world. It would have called forth the admiration of surrounding nations. It would have cast into the shade all the performances that had preceded it, and our children's children, in place of lisping out —as I hope they will do—the name of "Nelson" and "the wooden walls" of old England, would warble from their infant throats the name of "Picton," and the "wooden walls" of old England!

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ADVENTURES

OF THE

CONNAUGHT RANGERS.

CHAPTER I.

The Author leaves the depôt at Chelmsford, and proceeds to join his regiment in Portugal—The Samaritan—Arrival at Lisbon—Measures adopted by Marshal Junot—A night's rest—Portuguese barbers—Priest Fernando and Major Murphy—March to Aldea Gallega—First sight of the Connaught Rangers.

On the 10th day of October, 1809, I left the depôt at Chelmsford, and proceeded to Portsmouth for the purpose of joining the first battalion of my regiment (the 88th) in Portugal.

The newspapers announced that a fleet of transport vessels would sail in a few days, from Portsmouth, for Lisbon, and although I belonged to the second battalion, at that period stationed at Gibraltar, I waived all ceremony and without asking or obtaining leave from the general in command at Chelmsford (General Colburn), I took the first coach for London, where I arrived that evening, and the next day reached Portsmouth.

I waited upon Colonel Barlow, who commanded at Hilsea, and from him received an order to be

admitted on board a transport ship named the "Samaritan." No questions were asked as to my qualification for this request, as it was much easier in those days to get out to Portugal than return from it. I then requested of the Colonel that he would give me an order for "embarkation money," which I told him I understood was allowed to officers on going to Portugal. He laughed at the demand, and treated me with so little courtesy that I was glad to be rid of him.

I have said the name of the ship in which I was to make my first voyage was the "Samaritan." So it was. But it most certainly could not be fairly called the "Good Samaritan," for a more crazy old demirip of a ship never floated on the water. She was one of those vessels sent out, with many others at this period, to be ready to convey our army to England in the event of any disaster occurring to it. On board of her were ten or a dozen officers, who, like myself, had seen little of the world. We had no soldiers on board, and an inadequate ship's crew; but those deficiencies were amply made up for by the abundance of rats which infested the vessel, and which not only devoured a great portion of our small supply of provisions, but nearly ourselves into the bargain. One officer, ill from sea-sickness, was well nigh losing half of his nose, and another had the best part of his great toe eaten away. Providence, however, at length decreed that we should soon be rid of those torments, and on the 29th day of October the Rock of Lisbon presented itself to our view.

It is difficult to convey to the eye, much less to the imagination of those who have not seen it, a more imposing or beautiful sight than Lisbon presents when seen from the deck of a vessel entering the Tagus; its northern bank, upon which the city stands, sweeping with a gentle curve along the extent

of the city, shows to great advantage the vast pile of buildings, including palaces, convents, and private dwellings, standing like a huge amphitheatre before the view of the spectator; the splendid gardens and orange groves, the former abounding with every species of botanical plant, while the latter, furnishing the eye with a moving mass of gold, presents a *coup d'œil* which may be felt or conceived but which cannot be described.

Our vessel had scarcely reached the river when a pilot boat came along side of us, and for the first time I had an opportunity of looking at the natives of Portugal. I confess I was inexpressibly disgusted; the squalid appearance of those half amphibious animals, their complexion, their famished looks, and their voracious entreaties for salt pork, gave me but a so-so opinion of the patriots I had heard of and read of with so much delight and enthusiasm. Their bare throats, not even with muscle to recommend them, their dark eyes pourtraying more of the assassin than the patriot, and their teeth, white no doubt in comparison with their dark hides, was sufficient to stamp them in my eyes as the most ill-looking set of cut-throats I had ever beheld. Their costume, too, is any thing but striking, except strikingly ugly. Short *demi* petticoat trousers of white linen, a red sash, and their arms and legs naked, give them the appearance of a race of bad bred North American Indians; but landing at Lisbon, your foot once upon *terra firma*—

> "The cloud cap'd towers,
> The gorgeous palaces"—

and the fine gardens all vanish, not into *thin* air, but into the most infernal pestiferous atmosphere that ever unfortunate traveller was compelled to inhale. Here is a hideous change from what the first view led you to expect. It is, indeed, "love at first sight."

You are scarcely established in the first street, when you behold a group of wretches occupied in picking vermin from each other; while, sitting beside them, cross-legged, holding a distaff and spindle in her left hand, and fanning her *fogareioro* with her right, is a woman who sells chestnuts to any one whose stomach is strong enough to commence the process of mastication in so filthy a neighbourhood.

The appearance of every thing in Lisbon is so novel to an Englishman that he is at a loss which to most fix his attention upon. But the number of beggars and the packs of half famished dogs which infest the streets are in themselves sufficient to afford food for the mind, if not for either the beggars or the dogs. The latter crowd the streets after night-fall and voraciously devour the filth which is indiscriminately thrown from the different windows, and it is a dangerous service to encounter a pack of those famished creatures.

> "In every country there are customs known,
> Which they preserve exclusively their own;
> The Portuguese by some odd whims infected,
> Have Cloacina's temple quite rejected."

The French general, Junot, whatever his other faults might be, did a good thing in ridding Lisbon of this nuisance. On the fourth day after his arrival he ordered all dogs found in the streets after night-fall to be shot; and the proprietor of every door before which was found any dirt, after a certain hour in the morning, he caused to pay a fine according to the quantity of filth in front of his premises. But Junot had been too long driven from Lisbon to have his orders respected at the period I write of, and we were in consequence subjected to the annoyance of being half suffocated by the contents of divers utensils not necessary to name, or to the danger of being de-

voured by the herds of dogs who seemed to consider these windfalls as their particular perquisite.

The beggars, offensive as they were, were less so than the dogs, because in Portugal, like most countries professing the Roman Catholic religion, the giving of alms is considered an imperative duty; and according to their means, all persons supply the wants of the poor. From the gates of the convents, and from the kitchens of the higher classes, food is daily distributed to a vast number of mendicants, and those persons actually conceive they have a right to such donations; long habit has in fact sanctioned this right, and secure of the means to support their existence, they flock daily to their respective stations, awaiting the summons which calls them to the portal to receive the pittance intended for them. Thus it is that strangers suffer less inconvenience from this description of persons than they otherwise would, for the laziness of those wretches is so great, that although they will not hesitate to beg alms from a passing stranger, they will barely move from their recumbent posture to receive it, much less offer thanks for it.

Satisfied with my first evening's excursion, I returned to the hotel where we had bespoken our dinner and beds. The former was excellent; good fish, for which Lisbon is proverbial, *ragoûts*, and game, all well served up, gave us a *gout* for our wine. We discussed the merits of divers bottles, and it was late ere we retired to our chambers, I was going to say—place of rest—but never was word more misplaced, had I made use of it. Since the hour of my recollection, up to the moment that I write these lines, I never passed such a night. From the time I lay down, in hopes of rest, until the dawning of morning, I never, for five minutes at a time, closed my eyes. Bugs and fleas attacked me with a relentless fury, and when I arose in the fair daylight, to

consult my looking-glass, I had scarcely a feature recognizable. I was not however singular, for all my companions had shared the same fate. But it was absolutely necessary, before we attempted to perambulate the streets, that something should be done to render our appearance less horrible. We accordingly summoned the landlord with the view of ascertaining the name of some medical person who could administer to our wants; but he laughed at the idea of calling in surgical aid for so trifling a matter, which he said, and I believe him, was an every-day occurrence at his hotel. He recommended to us a man, as he was pleased to say, "well skilled in such cases," and one who had made a comfortable competency by his close residence to the hotel we occupied. The person who could have doubted the latter part of our host's harangue must have indeed been casuistical, because the number of patients which, to our own ears, not our sight, for sight we had none, fell to him in one night, was a sufficient guarantee that his yearly practice must be something out of the common.

The person thus described, and almost as soon introduced, was no other than the far-famed Joze Almeida Alcantaro de Castreballos, half brother to the celebrated Louiranna well known in Lisbon. A man, who as he himself jocosely said, had taken many a British officer by the nose. He was, in fact, neither more nor less than a common barber who gained a livelihood by shaving, bleeding, and physicing his customers.

The Portuguese barbers are like those of other countries, great retailers of scandal, and amply stocked with a fund of amusing conversation. They know everything, or seem to know everything, which, to nine-tenths of those they meet, is the same thing! This fellow told us all the news of the day, and added to it a thousand inventions, which his own fertile imagina-

tion supplied. He described the retreat of Wellington from Talavera as one caused by the want of the Portuguese army to co-operate with him, and if his account was to be given credit to, the whole world put together did not contain such an army as that of Portugal. He said that General Peacock, who commanded in Lisbon, invented stories every day, and that no intelligence from the army ought to be considered sterling, except what emanated from his (the barber's) shop. But then, said he, shrugging up his shoulders, and in broken English. "It is not one very uncommon ting, to see one Peacock spreading a tail!" He laughed at his pun, and so did we; but I have since heard that the merit of it did not belong to him.

"But, gentlemen," resumed the barber, "I come here as a professional man, not as a wit, though for that matter I am as much one as the other—but to the point, gentlemen! you seem to have suffered, and I am the man, able, ready, and willing to serve you. Look here," said he, holding up a white jar, having a superscription on the outside to the following effect: "*bixas boas*" (good leeches); "I am none of your quacks, that come *unprepared!* I do not want to write a prescription that will cost my customers a mint of money! Well did I know what you stood in need of when you sent for your humble servant. Within the last ten days, that is to say, since the arrival of the fleet of transports from Portsmouth, I have given employment to one thousand leeches in this very house. This hotel has made my fortune, and now, with the blessing of God and the Virgin Mary, I'll add to the number, already made use of, one hundred more, on the faces of those to whom I have the honour of addressing myself."

There was so much truth and sound sense in what the barber said, that we all submitted to the operation of leeching, which was of material service to us. Old

Wright of the 28th, already, from a wound, blind of one eye, now began to peep a little with the other, and it was amusing enough to those who could see it, to witness the coquetting between him and the barber. Indeed it would be difficult to say which of them was most pleased—he who received his sight, or he who was the means of restoring it. Quantities of cloths, steeped in warm water, were applied to our faces, and the crimson hue with which every basin was tinctured showed but too plainly that the "*bixas boas*" of the barber, Joze, were of the right sort. We kept our rooms the entire day, ate a moderate and light dinner, and at an early hour retired to our chambers, not without some misgivings of another night-attack. But the barber assured us there was no danger; and whether it was that the vermin, which nearly devoured us on the preceding night, had gorged themselves, or that the applications which Joze Almaida had administered to our wounded faces was of that nature to give them a nausea towards us, I know not, but, be this as it may, we enjoyed, unmolested, a comfortable night's repose, and in the morning our features had resumed their original shape and appearance.

We were seated at breakfast when the barber again made his appearance. He congratulated us upon our recovery, received his fee, which was extremely moderate, and took his leave. I have not since seen him, or is it likely I ever shall. In 1809 he was approximating to his sixtieth year; now thirty-seven years added to sixty would make him rather an elderly person. However, should he be still alive, and able to fulfil the functions of his calling, as well as he did when I met with him, I recommend him to all those who may visit Lisbon and require his aid; on the other hand, should he be no longer in the land of the living, I have paid his memory a just tribute—but not more than he deserved.

At twelve o'clock I took a calash, and reported myself to Major Murphy, of the 88th, who commanded at Belem. By him I was received with great kindness, and asked to dine with him at six o'clock. I returned to our hotel, where I found my companions awaiting my arrival. Although not perfectly restored to their good looks, they agreed to accompany me in a stroll through the town, which was a different quarter from that we had before explored. It was more obscure, and overstocked with beggars of every grade. The most hideous objects presented themselves to our view, and were worse than anything of the kind we had ever witnessed; for in most civilized countries the beggars retain some appearance, no matter how faint, of decency, but in Lisbon it is not so; there they keep close to your side, thrusting their dirty palms almost into your very mouth, and if that is not sufficient, they will not hesitate to follow you into a shop, pulling you by the arm, or using some such familiar means to remind you of their presence, nor will they leave you until they have wearied out your patience, or you have exhausted theirs.

At six o'clock I arrived at Major Murphy's quarters at Belem, where were several officers of the depôt, amongst them the Honourable Captain Powis, of the 83rd; he was considered to be one of the pleasantest men in the army, and young as I then was in the world, it may be supposed I was quite charmed with him; he gave us several imitations; he was, in truth, a most agreeable person.

Just as we were about to enter the dining-room, a note was handed to Murphy from the celebrated priest Fernando, he was an intimate friend of Murphy, and called the 88th his own regiment, because when that corps landed in Lisbon it was quartered in the convent of which Fernando was the head. Nothing could exceed his kindness and hospitality, and, being

the principal of the Inquisition, he was a man of great authority. His note was in these words:—

"Priest Fernando will cum dis day in boat to dine with Mr. Major Murphy."

He was as good as his word, for the note had been scarcely read aloud by Murphy when Fernando made his appearance. He was a remarkably handsome man, about forty years of age; full of gaiety and spirits; a great talker, a prodigious feeder, and a tremendous drinker. So soon as I was introduced to him, he took out a book from his pocket, which he opened and handed to me, requesting that I would write down my name in it. This book contained the name of every officer in the first battalion, and according as any died, or were either killed or wounded in action, it was regularly noted after his name. His conduct was of the most disinterested kind, and one of his first questions invariably was—"Did we want money?" It was late before we broke up, and next day an order was issued, directing us to be in readiness to march to join the army on the day but one following.

It did not require many hours' preparation to complete our arrangements, as there were several experienced officers to accompany the detachment, and they not only brought their own animals and provisions, but aided us by their advice in the purchase of ours. At the appointed hour all was in readiness, and the detachment, consisting of fifteen officers and two hundred and twenty men, composed of different regiments, marched from Belem, and embarked on the quay in boats which were prepared to carry us to Aldea Gallega. A short sail soon brought us across the Tagus, and towards evening we disembarked and took up our quarters at Aldea for the night. Our route, which was made by easy marches, was uninterrupted by any circumstance worthy of notice. We

passed through the different towns on the Alemtejo, in each of which we were hospitably received by the inhabitants; not so on our arrival at Badajoz, the head-quarters of Lord Wellington. Nothing could exceed the dogged rudeness of the Spaniards; and it was with difficulty we could obtain anything even for money. Civility was not to be purchased on any terms, and one of the detachment was killed in a fracas with some drunken muleteers. Next morning we left this inhospitable town, and each party took their respective routes, with the view of rejoining their regiments. Mine, the 88th, was stationed at Monforte, distant one march from Badajoz, and here, for the first time, I saw the "Connaught Rangers."

CHAPTER II.

Head-quarters of the 88th Regiment—Its losses from sickness—Unhealthy state of the country—Signal defeat of the Spaniards by the French—The British army leaves the Alemtejo—General Picton takes the command of the third division—Remarks on the general's conduct—His apology to Colonel Wallace—The Connaught Boy and the goat.

The 88th, at this period, although one of the strongest and most effective regiments in the army, did not count more than five hundred bayonets. The fatigues of the late campaign, and the unhealthiness and debility of many of the soldiers in consequence, caused a material diminution in our ranks; added to this, the country in the neighbourhood of the Guadiana was swampy and damp, and what between ague, dysentery, and fever, the hospitals were in a few weeks overstocked. Not less than ten thousand were on the sick list, or about one-third of the entire force, as borne on the muster-rolls; and there was a great paucity of medical officers; many of those had been left at Talavera with the wounded, that were of necessity obliged to be abandoned, and others, either catching the contagion that raged throughout the country, or infected by their close attendance in the hospitals, were lost to us. The consequence was that the men and officers died daily by tens and fifteens, and this

mortality was not confined to the old soldiers alone, for the young militia men, who now joined the army from England, suffered equally with those who were half starved on the retreat from Talavera, and during the occupation of the bridge of Heribisbo. For several days the rations of those soldiers consisted of half a pound of wheat, *in the grain*, a few ounces of flour twice in the week, and a quarter of a pound of goat's flesh; and regiments which a few weeks before were capable of exertions that were never equalled during the remainder of the Peninsular contest, were now unable to go through an ordinary march.

It was not to be wondered at, that men who had so suffered should be now attacked with disease when all excitement was over, and a reaction of the system be the natural consequence; but the young men who joined from England at this period, could not be so classed, and as it was manifest that the air of the country was unwholesome, Lord Wellington decided upon marching his wing to the north-eastern frontier; yet before quitting the Alemtejo it was necessary that the safety of Seville should be guaranteed by a sufficient Spanish force.

The complete overthrow of the Spanish army, commanded by General Areizaga, on the plain of Ocaña, was one of the most remarkable and fatal that occurred during the terrible contest in the Peninsula, and went well nigh to put an end to the war. In this battle the Spaniards lost nearly all their artillery, and twenty thousand men were made prisoners. Lord Wellington did all that was possible to prevent this catastrophe; but his advice was unheeded, and the fatal results of this battle, which he forewarned the Supreme Junta were sure to take place, were fulfilled to the letter, and from this period no offensive movement was made by the Spaniards.

Early in December the army left the Alemtejo, and

by the first week in January the third division was distributed in the different villages in the neighbourhood of Trancosa. The villages of Alverca and Frayadas, distant about two miles from each other, were allotted for the 88th Regiment. Midway between the two was a plain of considerable extent, and upon this plain the regiment exercised every day for several hours.

At the end of six weeks Colonel Wallace had his battalion in the most perfect state of discipline that it is possible to conceive; the men left in hospital were speedily joining the ranks, and the stragglers which were from necessity left behind in the north of Portugal were now coming in fast to their different regiments. It may be remembered that the army commanded by Lord Beresford in the spring of 1809 suffered great fatigues in their advance through the province of Tras os Montes; the 88th Regiment formed a portion of this army.

The march upon Amarante, the passage of the Douro, and the occupation of Oporto, are justly ranked high among the many brilliant achievements of the Duke of Wellington; nevertheless the very nature of the service in which this portion of the army was engaged unquestionably tended to put to severe trial the discipline of every corps employed in it. The rapidity and length of the marches—the very unfavourable state of the weather—the obstacles presented by the nature of the country in the Tras os Montes, where the men were frequently obliged to use torch-light to avoid the risk of being dashed to pieces in the craggy paths they were forced to traverse—the hospitality of the peasantry, who, totally ignorant of the imperious demands of military duty, were loud in commiserating and anxious to alleviate the hard fate of their deliverers thus compelled to march through their country at unseasonable hours,

and in such inclement weather, all offered temptations to straggling, which it is not at all wonderful that the men in many instances yielded to.

The best regulated army during a campaign, even if carried on under the most favourable circumstances, always becomes more or less relaxed in its discipline; and when it is considered that the wreck of the 88th Regiment, after its capture at Buenos Ayres was made up by drafts from the second battalion, that a few short months only were allowed it to recruit and re-organize before it was again employed in Portugal, it may be matter of regret, but certainly not of surprise, that it did not form an exception to the general rule. In fact, many men were left behind, and some period of repose was necessary to remedy these irregularities, but that repose could not be obtained, for, towards the end of June, the whole disposable British force was marched into Spain, and on the 27th and 28th of July was fought the battle of Talavera de la Reyna.

Meanwhile, many of the stragglers left behind, preferred remaining with the Portuguese and never joined the army again. Nevertheless, such of the good soldiers, who had been worn down by fatigue and were obliged to make a short stay, soon rallied, followed the track of their different regiments, and joined them by sixes and sevens. Others of a different stamp preferred remaining where they were, and continued under the hospitable roofs that had given them shelter, and made themselves useful to the inhabitants by assisting them to till their fields and gardens. Others, fatigued with the sameness of the scene, went through the country under pretence of seeking their different regiments, and in many instances committed acts that were disgraceful; and, strange to say, not the slightest effort was made to look after those stragglers and collect them.

Several of these men were shot by the peasants, while others were made prisoners, and were marched by the militia of the country to the nearest British depôt. There they were either flogged, hanged, or shot, according to the nature of their different offences. Others were sent under escorts to whatever corps they belonged. All this relaxation of discipline commenced as we have shown, in the early part of 1809, while the regiments of which those marauders formed a portion, between that period and the end of the year had marched over hundreds of miles, fought a battle in the heart of Spain, occupied a line of posts in the Guadiana, and finally, after the lapse of ten months, took up new ground on the north eastern frontier of Portugal.

It was at this time, and when the third division were stationed as has been described, that General Picton joined the army. It would be impossible to deny that a very strong dislike towards the General was prevalent; his conduct at the island of Trinidad, while Governor of that colony, and the torture inflicted, by his order, on Louise Calderon, a torture which, by the way, had been given up in our army as being worse than flogging, had impressed all ranks with an unfavourable opinion of the man; besides this, the strong appeal made by Mr. Garrow, the Attorney-General, to the jury by whom he was tried and found guilty, was known to all, and a very general, and I do believe a very unjust clamour was raised against him. From what I have just written it will be seen in what sort of estimation General Picton was held, and as we of his division had never seen him, his first appearance before his troops was looked for with no little anxiety.

Our wishes were soon gratified, for, in a few days after his arrival at Francosa, a division order was issued stating that on a certain day, which was named,

the division should be under arms and ready to receive the General.

Punctual to the appointed time, General Picton reached the ground accompanied by his staff; every eye was turned towards him, and, as first impressions are generally very strong and very lasting, his demeanour and appearance were closely observed. He looked to be a man between fifty and sixty, and I never saw a more perfect specimen of a splendid looking soldier. In vain did those who had set him down in their own minds as a cruel tyrant, seek to find out such a delineation in his countenance. No such marks were distinguishable; on the contrary there was a manly open frankness in his appearance that gave a flat contradiction to the slander, and in truth Picton was *not* a tyrant, or did ever act as such during the many years that he commanded the third division.

But if his countenance did not depict him as cruel, there was a caustic severity about it, and a certain curl of the lip that marked him as one who rather despised than courted applause. "The stern countenance, robust frame, caustic speech, and austere demeanour," told in legible characters that he was one not likely to say a thing and not do as he said. In a word, his appearance denoted him as a man of strong mind and strong frame.

The division went through several evolutions, and performed them in a very superior manner indeed; the line marching, and the echelon movements for which the 88th, under Wallace, was so celebrated, seemed to surprise the General, he however said little. Once he turned to Wallace and said, in rather a disagreeable tone, "very well, sir." The parade was about to be dismissed, and the General about to return to his quarters, when two marauders of the 88th were brought up in charge of a detachment of Portuguese

militia. They had stolen a goat on their march up to join their regiment. The complaint was at once made to Picton, who ordered the men to be tried by a drum-head court-martial on the spot. This was accordingly done; the men were found guilty and flogged on the moment in presence of the general.

This act was considered by all as not good taste in General Picton on his first appearance amongst his troops; the offence committed by the soldiers could have been as well punished in front of their own regiment as in the presence of the entire division; and, besides this, there was no necessity for the General's remaining to witness the punishment. This act on his part caused those who had formed a favourable opinion from his appearance, to waver, and the word "tyrant," was more than muttered by many of the division.

So soon as the two soldiers were removed after having received the number of lashes it was thought necessary to inflict, the general addressed the brigade in language, not of that bearing which an officer of his rank should do, but turning to the 88th he said, "You are not known in the army by the name of 'Connaught Rangers,' but by the name of Connaught *foot-pads!*" He also made some remarks on their country and their religion.

Language like this was enough to exasperate the lowest soldier, equally with the colonel, who had done so much for the regiment during his command, and Colonel Wallace, directly the parade was over, waited on General Mackinnon, who commanded the brigade, and requested that he would go to General Picton and intimate to him that he conceived the abusive language which he had made use of towards the 88th, was not just to the corps, or to himself as commanding officer of it.

Mackinnon was a strict disciplinarian, but a man

of an extremely mild temper, and he felt greatly annoyed at what had taken place. He readily complied with Colonel Wallace's request, and received for answer from Picton, that he would remove those impressions when he again had an opportunity of assembling the division.

A long period elapsed before the division was again brought together, and when it was, Picton neglected or perhaps forgot to fulfil the promise he had made. Immediately after the parade, Wallace reminded General Mackinnon of what had before passed on the subject, and Mackinnon, for the second time, waited on Picton. The latter requested that Wallace should call upon him, which was immediately complied with, and then took place that memorable interview which led to the apology made by Picton to Wallace, but which has been scoffed at by the reviewer of Picton in his letter addressed to the editor of the United Service Journal, for May 1836.*

When Wallace reached Picton's quarters he found the General alone; a long conversation took place, which Colonel Wallace never repeated to me, nor was it necessary that he should, because my rank did not entitle me to such disclosure, but I have reason to think that it was very animated, and what I am about to write I have from under Colonel (now General) Wallace's own hand. It is as follows:—

'After a conversation which it is here unnecessary to repeat, General Picton paused for a little, and said, 'Well, will you dine with me on ——?' I replied, 'Most certainly, General, I shall be happy to do so.'

'I went to dinner on the day appointed, I found almost all the superior officers of Picton's division, and those quartered in the vicinity of Pinhal, assem-

* Appendix, No. I.

bled. General Picton then addressed himself to Colonel Mackinnon, commanding the brigade, and said, 'I understand that Colonel Wallace has taken offence at some observations made by me relative to the corps he commands, when addressing the division. I am happy to find that I have been misinformed as to their conduct for some time past; and I feel it but justice to him and them, to say, that I am satisfied every attention has been paid to the conduct and appearance of the corps. I certainly did hear, on my way up to the army, of irregularities that had been committed, but I am happy to say that I have had every occasion to be satisfied with the general conduct of the corps since my joining the division.' I made no reply, but bowed to the general. Dinner was announced, and General Picton came up to me, and asked me to sit beside him at dinner. There ought always to be a deference given to a general of division by an officer inferior in rank, and under these circumstances I considered General Picton's conduct to have been arranged in a very gentlemanlike and handsome manner. From that period, General Picton and myself were always on the best terms, and though from prejudice he often signified that he suspected the *Connaught Boys* were as ready for mischief as any of their neighbours, he always spoke of them to me as good soldiers while I was with his division."

Thus ended the matter, and I never knew or heard that Picton ever once made use of a harsh expression towards the regiment; indeed, his biographer says, that he often gave them "unqualified praise." Perhaps he did, but for nearly four years that Picton commanded the third division, not one officer of the 88th was ever promoted through his recommendation, though it is well known in the army that many deserved it.

Shortly after this period a laughable circumstance took place between Picton and a soldier of the 88th, which put the general in great good humour, and he often repeated the story as a good joke. He was riding out one day, accompanied by his aid-de-camp, near the river Coa, when he saw, at the opposite bank of the river, a man of the Connaught Rangers with a huge goat on his back.

We had received but scanty rations for some days previously, and such a windfall as the old goat was not to be neglected. I am not prepared to state whether it was the cries of the animal, or the stench of his hide—for the wind was from that point,—attracted Picton to the spot; howbeit, there he was.

It would be difficult to say, with truth, whether the General was most angry or hungry, but he seemed, in either case, resolved not only to capture the goat, but also the "boy." That he would have done the one or the other, perhaps both, there can be little doubt, had it not been that a stream, whose banks had been the theatre of other scenes of contest, separated the parties. This stream was the Coa, and although its different fordable points were well known to Picton, his *vis-a-vis* neighbour was by no means ignorant of some of the passes; and as the General had not time to consult his chart, and find out the nearest "ford," nor inclination to plunge into the river, he made a furious, but quite an ineffectual, attack of words against the "Connaught boy."

"Pray sir," said, or rather roared Picton, addressing the soldier, "what have you got there?"

Sol. "A thieving puckawn, sir."

Pic. "A *what?*"

Sol. "A goat, sir. In Ireland we call a buck-goat a puckawn. I found the poor baste sthraying, and he looks as if he was as hungry as myself."

Pic. "What are you going to do with him, sir?"

Sol. "*Do* with him, is it? To bring him with me to be sure! Do you think I'd lave him here to starve?"

Pic. "Ah! you villain, you are at your old tricks, are you? I know you, though you don't think it!"

Sol. "And I know you, sir, and the 'boys of Connaught' know you, too, and I'd be sorry to do any thing that would be displaising to your honour; and, sure, iv you'd only let me, I'd send your sarvent a leg iv him to dhress for your dinner, for by my sowl your honour looks could and angry—hungry I mane."

He then held up the old goat by the beard, and shook it at Captain Tyler, the general's aid-de-camp, and taking it for granted that he had made a peace-offering to the General, or, probably, not caring one straw whether he had or not, went away with his burden, and was soon lost sight of amongst a grove of chestnut trees.

"Well," said Picton, turning to Tyler, who was nearly convulsed with laughter, "that fellow has some merit. What tact and what humour! He would make a good out-post soldier, for he knows, not only how to forage, but to take up a position that is unassailable."

"Why yes, sir," said Tyler, "when he held up the goat's head, he seemed to *beard* us to our faces; and his promise of sending you a leg was a capital *ruse!*"

"It was, faith," replied Picton, "and if the fellow is found out, he will, I suppose, endeavour to make *me* the 'scape-goat!'"

Picton used to often tell this story as one of the best things of the sort he had ever met with.

It is a remarkable circumstance that a few days before the battle of Waterloo, Picton met Wallace in London, when he spoke highly of the regiment, and said if it returned from America in time to join the army under the Duke of Wellington, (being then on

their passage home,) and if he joined the army, the 88th would be one of the first regiments he would ask for his division.

These matters have been mentioned thus fully by me in order to disprove the assertions made by the biographer of Sir Thomas Picton. The next chapter will touch on the events that took place previously, and subsequently to the invasion of Portugal by the army commanded by the Prince of Esling.

CHAPTER III.

Inefficiency of the Spanish generals—The British force—Lord Wellington and the Portuguese regency—Preparations for invading Portugal—French force in the Peninsula—Lines of Torres Vedras—Their extreme importance—Summary of the results of British valour—Claims of the soldiers of the Peninsula war to a decoration—Description of the Lines of Torres Vedras.

THE unfortunate termination of the campaign of 1809 in Germany and Spain is fresh in the recollection of most people; the memorable battles of Esling, Asperne, and Wagram, decided the fate of Austria; and the hard-earned victory of Talavera was not productive of any results which could induce even the most sanguine to hope for a favourable issue to the Peninsular contest. The want of energy and union amongst the Spaniards themselves, and Lord Wellington having, from experience, little or no reliance on any efforts the generals and troops of that nation would make in co-operative movement with him, declined to have more to do with them. He thus looked calmly on at the ill-judged movements and operations of the different Spanish generals. He had calculated in his own mind what the end would be; he did not conceal his opinion from the Spanish generals and the Spanish government, and the result proved he was correct in the opinion he had formed.

Every thing he foresaw turned out to be but too true, and three or four battles which the Spanish generals not only risked, but *courted*, terminated in the total overthrow of each of them.

Those events took place towards the end of the year 1809, and it may be presumed from the circumstance of our army being prepared to move upon Portugal, that Lord Wellington was belied by the Spanish government when it was announced by them that the British troops would act in concert with the Spanish armies in this ill-arranged campaign.

The fact is, that his lordship positively refused to co-operate with them in this rash campaign; yet, if he was to judge, as it was expected he would, by their muster-rolls, he ought to have joined heart and hand in the struggle they had resolved to rush into; and if all was to be credited, the Spaniards could bring into battle over one hundred thousand combatants. But of what description of troops were they? They were men half clothed, half armed, and nearly famished. They were about to enter the lists with the best soldiers Europe could boast of, and they were commanded by men as arrogant as they were ignorant. So far from joining in this mad enterprize, Lord Wellington was occupied in arranging measures that brought the Peninsular contest to a triumphant result.

When his lordship moved his army from the Guadiana its numbers counted about thirty thousand, but those under arms scarcely reckoned twenty thousand; the remainder were in hospital, and many of those in the ranks were but ill able to carry their knapsacks and firelocks, having not yet recovered from the effects of past illness.

In the month of January, 1810, Lord Wellington established his head quarters at Viseu, in Upper Beira, and the different brigades of cavalry and infantry were quartered in the neighbouring villages. General Hill

was left with five thousand British, and about as many Portuguese, at Abrantes; and with his army posted as has been described, the British General awaited the development of the French Marshal's plan of invasion. In February the Duke of Elchingen made a demonstration against Cuidad Rodrigo, and at the same time the Duke of Treviso threatened Badajos; General Hill advanced from Abrantes to Portalegre; and Lord Wellington reinforced the ground between Guarda and Pinhal.

General Robert Crawford, with the light division, passed to the other bank of the Coa, and those different movements plainly denoted that the invasion of Portugal was not only expected, but likely soon to take place. A panic seized the Portuguese regency, and this body were loud in their clamours for additional British troops; but they were rebuked and silenced by Lord Wellington, who more than hinted to them that the promises made by them were not kept; with respect to the native troops, he said that nothing was executed with vigour; and as regarded the British force, there were scarcely half enough carriages to supply their wants. Lord Wellington recommended those measures to be looked to before any additional troops were asked for.

From the different dispositions made by the French marshal, it was supposed he would invade Portugal by the northern line,—that is to say, by old Castile rather than by Andalusia; but this was an error. Though not present with the army, Napoleon directed its movements, and as usual his plans were gigantic; and it was not one portion of the Peninsula, but the entire, that was destined to feel the force of his vast power. A multitude of veterans, fresh, and flushed with their victories in Germany, were thronging into Spain, reinforcing the different corps, and following the track of those that had preceded them; and so overwhelm-

ing were their numbers, that it became a matter of doubt with many, whether Portugal would, or could, be defended at all.

The magnitude of the reinforcements that had arrived, and were arriving, from France, put it out of the question that the Spanish armies could act on the offensive. Their defeat and dispersion, one after another, the preceding autumn, had placed them *hors de combat*, or nearly so; and Lord Wellington's whole attention was occupied with the defence of Portugal. The amount of the French force at this period in the Peninsula, counted over three hundred and sixty thousand troops of all arms; but the army commanded by Massena, and called "the army of Portugal," did not amount to ninety thousand. The amount of the British and Portuguese forces has been already stated to be about fifty-five thousand men; and it will be recollected that of the Portuguese army scarcely one man in one hundred had ever discharged a musket against an enemy. Lisbon, Abrantes, and Belem castle, on the Tagus; Figueras and Raiva de Pena Cova, on the Mondego; and Oporto and Lomego, on the Douro,—were the principal depôts formed by Lord Wellington; and his magazines of consumption were established at Viseu, Celerias, Condeixa, Lurie, Thomàr, and Almeida.

The only means of conveyance for the transport of stores and provisions, were several hundred cars, belonging to the peasants, and about twelve thousand hired mules, which were formed into regular brigades. I have given this brief sketch of the amount of the enemy's force, as likewise the force and means which were at Lord Wellington's disposal to resist the torrent that was about to be launched against him; and before entering into the events that subsequently followed, I mean to give a description of the celebrated lines of Torres Vedras, scarcely known, at the period

I write of, to the British army; totally unheard of by the French army; and, even now, but imperfectly understood by a great portion of the British people. Nevertheless, those lines were the principal cause of the triumphant issue of the never-to-be-forgotten Peninsular contest. They saved Portugal; they saved Spain; they enabled the European powers to rally, and finally to crush the greatest military power, and the greatest military chief that Europe, or perhaps the world, ever saw; and they saved England from invasion—perhaps conquest.

The invincible men who defended those lines, aided no doubt by Portuguese and Spanish soldiers, afterwards fought for a period of four years, during which time they never suffered one defeat; and from the first commencement of this gigantic war to its final and victorious termination, the Peninsular army fought and won *nineteen* pitched battles, and innumerable combats; they made or sustained ten sieges, took four great fortresses, twice expelled the French from Portugal; preserved Alicant, Carthagena, Cadiz, and Lisbon: they killed, wounded, and took about *two hundred thousand* enemies, *and the bones of forty thousand British soldiers lie scattered on the plains and mountains of the Peninsula!*

Yet those heroes, who, for a series of nearly six years, fought and conquered the best soldiers in the known world, soldiers that were commanded by Massena, Soult, Marmont, Victor, Ney, Jourdan, and a host of others, whose names, coupled with their deeds, made them the terror of Europe; these men, I say, who performed those wonderful deeds, and who received the thanks of parliament on *fifteen* different occasions, have been denied a medal for their services; and, strange to say, the Duke of Wellington, who commanded them, has never advocated their claims, but, on the contrary, has done much to prevent their

being granted. The gallant Duke of Richmond, however, has presented a petition to Her Majesty, signed by hundreds of Peninsular officers, and it is hoped and believed that the Queen will grant the prayer of their petition, the more so as medals have been given to the army that fought in India and in China. The services of those armies no doubt have been great, and are well worthy of a medal, but the battles fought by them, and the description of troops they combatted against, has been compared by a writer, in the comparison of those conquered by the Peninsular army, as "ossa to a wart."

The lines of Torres Vedras consisted of three distinct ranges of defence. The first, extending from Alhandra on the Tagus to the mouth of the Zizandra on the sea-coast, was, following the inflections of the hills, twenty-nine miles long. The second, traced at a distance, varying from six to ten miles in rear of the first, stretched from Quintella on the Tagus to the mouth of the St. Lorenza, being twenty-four miles in length. The third, intended to cover a forced embarkation, extended from Passo d'Arcos on the Tagus to the tower of Junquera on the coast: here an outer line, constructed on an opening of three thousand yards, enclosed an entrenched camp designed to cover the embarkation with fewer troops, should the operation be delayed by bad weather; and within this second camp, Fort St. Julian's (whose high ramparts and deep ditches defied an escalade) was armed and strengthened to enable a rear guard to protect both itself and the army.

The nearest point of the second line was twenty-four miles from these works at Passo d'Arcos, and some parts of the first line were two long marches distant; but the principal routes led through Lisbon, where measures were taken to retard the enemy and give time for the embarkation.

Of these stupendous lines, the second, whether regarded for its strength or importance, was undoubtedly the principal, and the others only appendages, the one as a final place of refuge, the other as an advanced work to stem the first violence of the enemy, and enable the army to take up its ground on the second line without hurry or pressure. Massena having, however, wasted the summer season on the frontiers, the first line acquired such strength, both from labour and from the fall of rain, that Lord Wellington resolved to abide his opponent's charge there.

The ground presented, being, as it were, divided into five parts or positions, shall be described in succession from right to left. 1st. From Alhandra to the head of the valley of Calandrix. This distance, of about five miles, was a continuous and lofty ridge, defended by thirteen redoubts, and for two miles rendered inaccessible by a scarp sixteen to twenty feet high, executed along the brow. 2nd. From the head of the vale of Calandrix to the Pé de Monte. This position, also five miles in length, consisted of two salient mountains, forming the valley of Aruda, that town being exactly in the mouth of the pass. Only three feeble redoubts, totally incapable of stopping an enemy for an instant, were constructed here. 3rd. The Monte Agraca. This lofty mountain overtopped the adjacent country in such a manner, that from its summit the whole of the first line could be distinctly observed. The right was separated from the Aruda position by a deep ravine which led to nothing, the left overlooked the village and valley of Zibreira, and the centre overhung the town of Sobral. The summit of this mountain was crowned by an immense redoubt, mounting twenty-five guns, and having three smaller works, containing nineteen guns. 4th. From the valley of Zibreira to

Torres Vedras. This position was seven miles long. The ground being rough and well defined, and the valley in front watered by the Zizandre, now become a considerable river, it presented a fine field of battle for a small army.

The account here given of these celebrated lines; is taken from the third volume of Colonel Napier's "History of the Peninsular War," and by him from Colonel Jones's "Sieges in the Peninsula." It is but right that I should state this fact, as otherwise the reader might give me credit for a degree of knowledge that I have no claim to, or wish to affect.

CHAPTER IV.

Movements of the French—Expectation of the English army evacuating Portugal—The French under Marshal Ney lay siege to Ciudad Rodrigo—Firmness of Lord Wellington in refusing assistance to the garrison—Assault on the fortress—Its surrender—French force under Massena attack the fortress of Almeida—Dreadful fire and explosion—Treasonable plot—Rashness of General Crawford.

ANDALUSIA was invaded, and this seemed the signal for a simultaneous movement of the host of French troops which occupied Spain. Cadiz and Seville were menaced by Victor, while Mortier appeared before Badajoz. Ney summoned Rodrigo, and Bonnet entered the Asturias. At the same time Loison occupied Leon. Thus it might be said that almost the entire of Spain from the base of the Pyrenees to the walls of Cadiz was covered with a mighty moving mass of French soldiers.

These astounding preparations paralysed the Spaniards; and in the British army it was generally believed that the entire force would embark on its reaching Lisbon. The same was asserted in England; the Portuguese dreaded it; the French army universally believed it, and the British ministers seem to have entertained the same opinion; for at this time an officer of engineers arrived at Lisbon,

whose instructions, received personally from Lord Liverpool, though unknown to Lord Wellington, commenced thus: "*as it is probable that the army will embark in September.*" *

At this period (June 1810) the Prince of Esling was still at Madrid, but the first siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was entrusted to Marshal Ney. The garrison amounted to about six thousand men, and was commanded by the Spanish general, Herrasti, an old and gallant man who had served his country with honour for more than half a century. The town was amply supplied with artillery, provisions, and stores of all kinds; and the vigorous resistance which was expected, was made by Herrasti and his brave garrison.

General Robert Crawford, with his superb division, occupied the line of the Coa, while General Cole, with the fourth division, and Picton with the third, were posted at Guarda and Pinhal; and these troops were directed to be in readiness to render any support that could with safety be given to the Spanish governor.

The sixth corps, counting about thirty thousand, were occupied in the siege; and on the 25th of June the French batteries opened against the fortress. The fire of this day alone caused the garrison a loss of nearly seven hundred men; but though no way daunted, Herrasti sent a note by a peasant, imploring assistance, and the Marquis of Romana arrived at the head quarters of Lord Wellington and in the strongest terms urged his lordship to acquiese, but the thing was impossible. Lord Wellington positively refused to send even one division. The moment was a trying one, but the refusal was unavoidable, and though Lord Wellington was blamed not only by the Spaniards and Portuguese, but by his own army, and taunted by the French marshal in his proclamations,

* Napier.

nothing could move him from his original plan, and by this steel-hardiness and moral courage, the Peninsula was saved.

On the 27th Massena joined the army before Ciudad Rodrigo and summoned the governor to surrender. The summons was refused, and the fire against the place continued until the 1st of July. On that day fresh batteries were constructed, and their fire was so powerful that nearly all the guns of the fortress were silenced. Nevertheless the governor and his brave garrison did all that men could do to remedy the damage and re-organize the disabled guns, but in vain; the different outworks were carried, and the convent of Santa Cruz, in the suburbs, was taken, and again retaken by the garrison, but it finally remained with the French.

The town took fire in several places, and a mine which had been constructed by the French, exploded, and throwing down several yards of the wall, filled the ditch with the ruins, and showed to the assaulting army a wide and practicable breach. "At this moment, three French soldiers of heroic courage suddenly running out of the ranks, mounted the breach, looked into the town, and having thus, in broad daylight, proved the state of affairs, discharged their muskets, and with matchless fortune retired unhurt to their comrades." *

The column of assault was now formed; the three men who had so gallantly proved the breach, were present, and their example, as likewise the presence of Marshal Ney, tended greatly to excite them; and, with loud shouts, they desired to be let forward; but at this moment the signal of surrender waved from the walls, and the old governor was seen standing, with his head uncovered, on the ruins of a place he had so gallantly defended.

* Napier.

Thus fell the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, after sustaining a siege of upwards of a month. Its gallant defence reflected great credit on both the governor and garrison, and the delay it caused the French army was of the greatest importance to Lord Wellington's plan of resistance, because the heavy rains which were almost sure to fall in the autumn would greatly aid in the defence of the country.

After his capture of Rodrigo, Massena lost no time in laying siege to Almeida, and it was hoped that this town, which was, though by no means, a model of perfection, a more regularly constructed fortress than Ciudad Rodrigo, would hold out at least as long, in which case the season would be very far advanced before Massena could reach the lines of Torres Vedras, and the rivers of the country, many of them capricious in their rising and falling, would be so swollen, that it would add tenfold to the difficulties of an invading army.

The force which Massena assembled before Almeida was so small in comparison with that collected for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, that it has been said Lord Wellington meditated a sudden attack on his lines with the view of raising the siege, carrying off the French battering train, and bringing away the garrison; but the terrible disaster which now took place rendered the attempt impossible.

On the 26th of August the fire of three score heavy cannon opened against the fortress; these guns were mounted in several batteries, and in a short time a great portion of the town was in flames, and it was found impossible, in the confusion that prevailed, to put a stop to the calamity. Nevertheless, the guns of the garrison replied with vigour, and but little damage was done to the walls; towards evening the firing on both sides abated considerably, and the houses that had taken fire were entirely consumed.

A comparative quiet now prevailed, but towards midnight a terrible explosion was heard, the castle was rent into a thousand pieces, and the entire town disappeared as if swallowed by an earthquake. This tremendous crash was heard at a distance of many leagues, and as a matter of course, the governor, Colonel Cox, was obliged to surrender the place.

There can be no doubt that a treasonable plot had been set on foot by some of the Portuguese officers, and suspicion was fixed on two, one named Bernardo Costa, the other, José Bareiros; the latter deserted to the French, but Costa was tried by a court-martial and shot in accordance with his sentence.

While these events were taking place, a variety of movements with our advance and that of the enemy occurred. Upon one occasion a portion of the 14th dragoons came in contact with a body of the enemy's infantry, and their commanding officer, Colonel Talbott, fell in the midst of a square against which he made a gallant, but fruitless charge. But this was of little import in comparison with what took place with the light division, under Crawford, on the banks of the Coa. His force consisted of four thousand infantry, a thousand cavalry, and a brigade of guns.

The force opposed to him was about six times his own number, but yet he, with a hardihood bordering on rashness, held his post, and fought a very dangerous battle—contrary to orders, I believe—and lost upwards of three hundred men, with nearly thirty officers, and had it not been for the superior description of the troops he commanded, the division would have been destroyed to a man. The French, it is true, lost three times the number Crawford did; but what of that? Massena could have better spared one thousand men than Wellington one hundred!

It has been said that Crawford fully expected Picton would have joined him with the third division, sta-

tioned at Pinhal. The division of Picton were within hearing of the fire, but not a man was ordered to move to the support of Crawford. The wounded men and officers of the light division came into Pinhal in the best manner they could; some on foot, others on cars, and the third division were much excited at not being allowed to join their old companions.

Colonel Wallace held the 88th in readiness, as I believe did every other officer commanding a battalion, and the division could have assembled and marched in ten minutes had any order been given to that effect. However, the light division, after performing more than could have been expected, even from it, and doing so alone, without the aid which it looked for, and which might have been afforded it, held their ground, and sustained no disaster, but on the contrary inflicted a severe loss on the enemy, and covered itself with glory.

CHAPTER V.

Marshal Massena and his military arrangements—Lord Wellington and the Portuguese government—Disproportion of the British forces to the French—Judicious conduct of Lord Wellington —Anecdote of General Napier—Lord Wellington obliged to give battle—Relative positions of the French and English armies previous to the battle of Busaco.

THE two frontier towns, Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, being in the possession of Marshal Massena; Crawford driven across the Coa, and no troops sent by the British general to dispute his right to the ground he had gained, satisfied him that his advance would be, for a time at least, unmolested.

He was thus left at liberty to make choice of his line of operations, and the line of the Mondego was the one he pitched upon. He suddenly assembled his army; thirteen days bread was issued to each soldier, and this, in itself, is sufficient to prove what a superior army the French must have been. To attempt the same with British troops would be quite hopeless.

The Prince of Esling did not fail to issue proclamations to the inhabitants of Portugal of the most friendly nature. He represented Lord Wellington as a man devoid of feeling and courage, as one who only

sought to enslave Portugal, and one, although backed as he was by the brave men of that nation, dreaded an encounter with the French troops—so few in number! These appeals were in many instances attended to, and the French portion, or at least those in the interest of the Lisbon cabinet, did not fail to take advantage of it, and an old priest of the name of Souza was the leading man in everything that marred the combinations of the British general.

When Lord Wellington determined to defend Portugal against this invasion, he asked but little from the government of that kingdom. He only required that they would supply their own troops; that they would follow his advice in rendering the country as inhospitable as it could be to an invading army; that all persons, not disposed to remain in their abodes, should destroy everything which would conduce to the support and maintenance of the invaders; and that in every place the different mills should be rendered useless. He pointed out to the government, clearly and distinctly, his objects in so advising them; but he was unheeded, and so far from being convinced that he had taken a right view of the matter, those men—traitors they may be called, and traitors they were—had the presumption to tell him, not only that he should fight a battle, but where and when he ought to fight it.

Lord Wellington was not slow in putting down this cabal, but he had more to dread from its reaction than from the force that outwardly assailed him. With the latter he could cope, and had made his arrangements so to do, but the under current at Lisbon shackled his plans.

Besides all this, many military men censured him for allowing Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida to be lost without striking a blow in their defence, and many officers wrote to their friends in England the opinions

they held on these points. Those letters were published in the newspapers, and caused a great deal of inquietude in the mind of the public; but his lordship read them all-unmoved, and his only observation was—that he hoped it would not occur again.

Now, had Lord Wellington given battle at either of the places named, his army would have been lost. The Prince of Esling never brought into play more than thirty thousand men at those sieges. He thus had nearly fifty thousand veteran troops in hand, with a cavalry little short of twelve thousand. To oppose this formidable army of veterans, the English general could, at most, bring thirty thousand men. General Hill was away, observing Reynier's corps, and even taking into calculation the fifteen thousand men he commanded, and supposing him to be on the spot, what could induce Lord Wellington to fight a pitched battle in a flat country, with an army, one half of which were Portuguese, and who had never seen a shot fired, against the best troops that Europe ever saw, with a cavalry double the number of those he could bring into the field?

Besides this, unless there was a certainty of a very great success, the thing could not be risked. A great plan of defensive operations, after months of the most mature deliberation, had been fixed upon, and it would be an act of insanity in the man who would give up what he considered as certain, for a chance where there were ten to one against him.

The plans of the French generals were well laid; they were ably seconded by their faction in the cabinet of Lisbon; and had the British commander been caught in the snare and advanced to the Agueda, much less the Tormes, it would not have given Lord Liverpool much uneasiness as to the number of transport ships necessary to convey the army home.

The third division, under Picton, were stationary

at Pinhal. Crawford, after his gallant fight, was, with his division, in the different villages in our front, and a quiet calm succeeded the first outburst. There was an inactivity in the movements of the enemy, notwithstanding that the soldiers had been supplied with bread for many days; and a curious incident took place at the time that is worthy of mention. It shows the good terms upon which the British and French officers stood in regard to each other.

Colonel Napier of the 50th regiment, who had been badly wounded at Corruna, and who had been treated with much attention by Soult and Ney after he was made prisoner at that battle, stopped at Pinhal. He was on his parole, and when asked by some of our officers, whom he knew, "where he was going?" replied, "I am going to pass some time with my friend Marshal Ney!" He did pass some time with him, and was an eye witness to all that went on in his camp, but where such confidence was shown to any British officer, much less one of such high character and honour as Colonel Napier, it is needless to say that it was not forfeited. The colonel (now general) is a brother of *the* historian of the Peninsular War.

Napier, after having stayed with his friend, Ney, for some weeks, returned on his way to England, when *en passant* he found the ridge of Busaco was about to be contested, and the gallant colonel, although not on duty, or in any way connected with the army, being in fact on his *parole*, wished to be a looker on. It so happened that he was wounded, while standing near Lord Wellington. His name was returned, and the French official paper the "Moniteur," made some remarks upon the colonel breaking his *parole*. It was, however, soon explained by the gallant officer, and, in return, the Paris papers did not let pass an occasion which afforded them amusement, and they quaintly remarked "that a man who was so fond of

French fire, after what he had got of it before,—ought to live in France!"

After a good deal of delay and vacillation, it appeared that Massena had at last seriously resolved on his enterprize. He had, under his immediate command, nearly one hundred and twenty thousand bayonets and sabres, but from this force some deductions must be made, by which it would appear that at the utmost he did not bring more than sixty thousand fighting men across the Coa. Finally he passed that river, and our army retired towards the banks of the Mondego,—and Lord Wellington was obliged to give battle. But this obligation did not emanate from him,—quite the contrary.

It was necessary that he should do something, and the thing was forced upon him by the refractory spirit of the Portuguese councils. If then he was to fight, for the first time, with an army of Portuguese to back him, he judged that the ridge of Busaco was a good spot to try them, and he accordingly resolved to take his stand there. This ridge of mountain extends for about eight miles, and near its termination, and on a high point, stands a convent, inhabited by monks and friars. The face of the mountain is rugged, filled with dells and dykes, and the intervening space between its base and the top is one mass of rock and heath.

On the 22nd September, the Portuguese brigade of Park destroyed the bridges on the Criz, and fell back upon Crawford's division. The French, however, soon perfected their arrangements, constructed new bridges in place of the ones destroyed, and finally drove in all the outposts, cavalry as well as infantry. On the 24th, two days after, the augmentation of the enemy's force was visible.

On the 25th the light division was attacked, and Crawford, with his usual impetuosity, wanted to fight. Lord Wellington, however, having arrived at the

moment, took the command in person, and set matters to right; and the division of Crawford, after escaping great danger, was freed from further annoyance. Nevertheless, there was some sharp fighting and many lives lost before the light division occupied the ground allotted for it; but the troops of Ney soon crowned the heights in Crawford's front, and it was manifest that his object was to carry that point. While Marshal Ney was thus striving, Reynier turned to the left and moved towards Saint Antonio de Cantara, nearly opposite to where the division of Picton were standing: and a very formidable French force was in array and ready to attack the hill, which at this time, was barely half occupied by our troops,— but Massena was absent, and no attack took place.

The French counted more than forty thousand, and there can be little doubt that if they attacked on the 25th, instead of the 27th, a far different account would have been given of the contest; but the Prince of Esling was a man of slow habits, and neglected to profit by occasions. In place of being with his two corps, he was many miles distant, and the wishes of Ney and Reynier to attack on the 25th were unheeded.

One day made a material difference in the line of defence of the British general. During the 26th all the different corps were placed in the stations they should occupy, and the entire ridge of Busaco was fully manned on the 26th; during the evening we could perceive the enemy occupying their different stations in our front, and the light troops of both armies were warmly engaged along the entire of the line.

At night we lay down to rest; each man with his firelock in his grasp, remained at his post, anxiously waiting the arrival of the morrow, which was destined to be the last that many amongst us were to behold.

We had no fires, and the death-like stillness that reigned throughout our army was only interrupted by the occasional challenge of an advanced sentry, or a random shot fired at some imaginary foe.

Some of us sat together chatting over the past, or guessing at the future; it was impossible not to regard the scene below us with feelings of awe. An army of sixty thousand warriors, just returned from their victories in Germany, covered with trophies, and commanded by officers inferior to none, lay within cannon shot of us; their demeanour, too, argued a confidence in themselves which characterizes the French soldier above any other in the world; more than a thousand fires illumined their camp, and we could perceive them in groups, either sitting round their blaze, or performing their ordinary avocations with that *sang-froid* which alone belongs to men accustomed to danger.

Our attitude, though less brilliant, was nevertheless an imposing one. We occupied an immense ridge studded with rocks, the very look of which was enough to inspire an enemy with respect. A numerous artillery out-topped these natural defences. A line of fifty thousand infantry, twenty-five thousand of them British, were stationed on the summit of this terrific ridge, and the stern appearance of discipline which our *bivouac* presented, must have impressed the enemy with an idea that its occupants were men of no ordinary stamp.

Circumstanced as I have described, the two armies lay, anxiously counting the hours that kept them asunder. The night at length passed over, but long before the dawn of day the warlike preparations of the enemy were to be heard. The trumpets sounded for the horsemen to prepare for the fight, and the roll of the drums and shrill notes of the fife gave notice to the infantry that the hour had arrived when

its claim to being the best in Europe was to be disputed.

On our side all was still as the grave. Lord Wellington lay amongst his soldiers, under no other covering than his cloak, and as he passed through the ranks of the different battalions, already formed, his presence and manner gave that confidence to his companions which had a magical effect. All was now ready on our part; the men stood to their arms; and as each soldier took his place in the line, his quiet demeanour, and orderly, but determined appearance, was a strong contrast to the bustle and noise which prevailed amongst our opposite neighbours; but those preparations were of short continuance, and some straggling shots along the brow of the mountain gave warning that we were about to commence the battle of Busaco.

CHAPTER VI.

Battle of Busaco—Remarks upon the battle—Conflicting statements of different writers—Adventure of Captain Seton—Alcobaça—Remarks on the battle.

This battle, fought on the 27th September, 1810, though one in which the losses of the French and of the British and Portuguese army, commanded by Lord Wellington, were not of that magnitude to give it a first-rate place on the battle list, the loss of the French being not more than about five thousand (if so much), including four generals, viz., General Gnain d'Orge killed, Generals Foy and Merle wounded, and General Simon made prisoner, while that of the allied army was under two thousand, amongst which number not one general officer had fallen; the total loss of the two armies, counting about one hundred thousand combatants, was under seven thousand: this same battle of Busaco was, nevertheless, one of the most serious ever fought in the Peninsula, and for this reason—it was the first in which the Portuguese levies were brought under fire, and upon their conduct in this their maiden effort against their veteran opponents, depended the fate of Portugal, and the Peninsula also. Such being the case, it must ever be classed as a very important event, and one that should be recorded by the historian with great care and fidelity, yet, strange

to say, there is not, that I have read, at least, any faithful report of this battle in print. In vain do we turn to Colonel Napier's splendid history of the war in the Peninsula, in expectation of finding a correct account, but no such account is to be there found. In the fifth volume of his book, he gives the authority of Colonel Waller, an officer on the staff of the second division, and it would appear that Colonel Napier, never doubting (and who could doubt so circumstantial a detail as that given by Colonel Waller?) this account, published his description of the part the third division took in the battle in conformity with Colonel Waller's report. Colonel Napier was not with the third division on the morning in question—he was far away to the left, fighting with his own corps; it was not possible for him to see what was taking place with Picton's troops, and he naturally looked for information to those persons who were on the spot, and who, from their rank and station, ought to be counted upon as good authority as to what they related: but how does the matter stand in the present instance? Not one syllable advanced by Colonel Waller in his carefully-written account furnished by him to Colonel Napier, touching the operations of Picton's division, but more particularly to the brigade of General Lightburne, is correct. Colonel Waller says,—

"More undaunted courage never was displayed by French troops than on this occasion; it could not have been surpassed, for their columns advanced in despite of a tremendous fire of grape and musketry from our troops in position in the rocks, and overcoming all opposition, although repeatedly charged by Lightburne's brigade, or rather by the whole of Picton's division, they advanced, and fairly drove the British right wing from the rocky part of the position," &c.

Now, most unquestionably, this is a very strong and positive assertion, and one that makes it a delicate point to contradict, the more so as Colonel Waller, adds, "*being an eye-witness*," &c.; but what are the facts? So far from the brigade of Lightburne being ever attacked, much less charged, that brigade never fired one shot throughout the battle! There was nothing in their front to attack them, and, consequently, so far from charging as Colonel Waller so vividly describes their having done, they remained inactive spectators of what was taking place on their right, and were obliged reluctantly to look on at the contest with their companions, consisting of the brigades of Mackinnon and d'Chaplemonde, and the division of Reynier. As to the showers of "grape" which Colonel Waller speaks of, it is just as incorrect as the clashing of bayonets; there were no French troops (after the sharp-shooters had moved to their left) in front of the point held by Lightburne's brigade, and the moment it became manifest that the real attack was more to our right, and nearly in front of the brigade of Mackinnon, the guns were limbered up and brought into line where the French columns were descried mounting the hill. It would thus appear, if what I say be correct, and if it be not, it is easy to contradict me, that those awful attacks of the French, and those determined charges made by Lightburne's brigade, as described by Colonel Waller, had no foundation whatever.*

I have thought it necessary to be thus explicit in my remarks upon this very strange and erroneous document of Colonel Waller's; and in what I am going to relate as to the part the third division took in this battle, I shall keep as close as I possibly can to what I know to be the fact.

* Appendix, No. II.

The haze was so thick that little could be seen at any great distance, but the fire of the light troops along the face of the hill put it beyond doubt that a battle would take place. Lord Wellington was close up with the brigade of Lightburne, and from the bustle amongst his staff, it was manifest that the point held by Picton's division was about to be attacked. Two guns belonging to Captain Lane's troop of artillery were ordered upon the left of the 88th Regiment, and immediately opened their fire, while the Portuguese battery, under the German Major, Aranchild, passed at a trot towards the Saint Antonio Pass, in front of the 74th British.

A rolling fire of musketry, and some discharges of cannon, in the direction of Saint Antonio, announced what was taking place in that quarter, and the face of the hill immediately in front of the brigade of Lightburne, and to the left of the 88th Regiment, was beginning to show that the efforts of the enemy were about to be directed against this portion of the ground held by the third division.

The fog cleared away, and a bright sun enabled us to see what was passing before us. A vast crowd of *tirailleurs* were pressing onward with great ardour, and their fire, as well as their numbers, was so superior to that of our advance, that some men of the brigade of Lightburne, as also a few of the 88th Regiment, were killed while standing in line; a colour-sergeant named Macnamara was shot through the head close beside myself and Ensign Owgan. Colonel King, commanding the 5th Regiment, which was one of those belonging to Lightburne's brigade, oppressed by a desultory fire he was unable to reply to without disturbing the formation of his battalion, brought his regiment a little out of its range, while Colonel Alexander Wallace, of the 88th, took a file of men from

each company of his regiment, and placing them under the command of Captain George Bury and Lieutenant William Mackie, ordered them to advance to the aid of our people, who were overmatched and roughly handled at the moment. Our artillery still continued to discharge showers of grape and canister at half range, but the French light troops, fighting at open distance heeded it not, and continued to multiply in great force. Nevertheless, in place of coming up direct in front of the 88th, they edged off to their left, out of sight of that corps, and far away from Lightburne's brigade, and from the nature of the ground, they could be neither seen or their exact object defined; as they went to their left, our advance inclined to the right, making a corresponding movement; but though nothing certain could be known, as we soon lost sight of both parties, the roll of musketry never ceased, and many of Bury's and Mackie's men returned wounded. Those two officers greatly distinguished themselves, and Bury, though badly wounded, refused to quit the field. A soldier of Bury's company, of the name of Pollard, was shot through the shoulder, but seeing his captain wounded and continue at the head of his men, threw off his knapsack, and fought beside his officer; but this brave fellow's career of glory was short, a bullet penetrated the plate of his cap, passed through his brain, and he fell dead at Bury's feet. These were the sort of materials the 88th were formed of, and these were the sort of men that were unnoticed by their general!

Lord Wellington was no longer to be seen, and Wallace and his regiment standing alone without orders, had to act for themselves. The colonel sent his captain of Grenadiers (Dunne) to the right, where the rocks were highest, to ascertain how matters stood, for he did not wish, at his own peril, to quit the ground

he had been ordered to occupy without some strong reason for so doing. All this time the brigade of Lightburne, as also the 88th, were standing at ordered arms.

In a few moments, Dunne returned almost breathless; he said the rocks were filling fast with Frenchmen, that a heavy column was coming up the hill beyond the rocks, and that the four companies of the 45th were about to be attacked. Wallace asked if he thought half the 88th would be able to do the business? "You will want every man," was the reply.

Wallace, with a steady but cheerful countenance, turned to his men, and looking them full in the face, said, "Now, Connaught Rangers, mind what you are going to do; pay attention to what I have so often told you, and when I bring you face to face with those French rascals, drive them down the hill—don't give the false touch, but push home to the muzzle! I have nothing more to say, and if I had, it would be of no use, for in a *minit* or two there'll be such an infernal noise about your ears, that you won't be able to hear yourselves."

This address went home to the hearts of us all, but there was no cheering; a steady but determined calm had taken the place of any lighter feeling, and it seemed as if the men had made up their minds to go to their work unruffled or too much excited.

Wallace then threw the battalion from line into column, right in front, and moved on our side of the rocky point at a quick pace; on reaching the rocks, he soon found it manifest that Dunne's report was not exaggerated; a number of Frenchmen were in possession of this cluster, and so soon as we approached within range, we were made to appreciate the effects of their fire, for our column was raked from front to rear. The moment was critical, but Wallace, without

being in the least taken aback, filed out the Grenadiers and first battalion companies, commanded by Captains Dunne and Dansey, and ordered them to storm the rocks, while he took the fifth battalion company, commanded by Captain Oates, also out of the column, and ordered that officer to attack the rocks at the opposite side as that assailed by Dunne and Dansey. This done, Wallace placed himself at the head of the remainder of the 88th, and pressed on to meet the French column.

At this moment the four companies of the 45th, commanded by Major Gwynne, a little to the left of the 88th, and in front of that regiment, commenced their fire, but it in no way arrested the advance of the French column, as it, with much order and regularity, mounted the hill, which at this point is rather flat. But here, again, another awkward circumstance occurred. A battalion of the 8th Portuguese infantry, under Colonel Douglas, posted on a rising ground, on our right, and a little in our rear, in place of advancing with us, opened a distant and ill-directed fire, and one which would exactly cross the path of the 88th, as that corps was moving onward to meet the French column, which consisted of three splendid regiments, viz., the 2nd Light Infantry, the 56th, and the 70th of the line. Wallace, seeing the loss and confusion that would infallibly ensue, sent Lieutenant John Fitzpatrick, an officer of tried gallantry, with orders to point out to this regiment the error into which it had fallen; but Fitzpatrick had only time to take off his hat, and call out "*Vamous commarades*," when he received two bullets,—one from the Portuguese, which passed through his back, and the other in his left leg from the French, which broke the bone, and caused a severe fracture; yet this regiment continued to fire away, regardless of the consequences, and a battalion

of militia, which was immediately in rear of the 8th Portuguese, took to their heels the moment the first volley was discharged by their own countrymen!

Wallace threw himself from his horse, and placing himself at the head of the 45th and 88th, with Gwynne, of the 45th, on the one side of him, and Captain Seton of the 88th, at the other, ran forward at a charging pace into the midst of the terrible flame in his front. All was now confusion and uproar, smoke, fire, and bullets, officers and soldiers, French drummers and French drums knocked down in every direction; British, French, and Portuguese mixed together; while in the midst of all was to be seen Wallace, fighting,—like his ancestor of old!—at the head of his devoted followers, and calling out to his soldiers to "press forward!" Never was defeat more complete, and it was a proud moment for Wallace and Gwynne when they saw their gallant comrades breaking down and trampling under their feet this splendid division, composed of some of the best troops the world could boast of. The leading regiment, the 36th, one of Napoleon's favourite battalions,* was

* In the Memoirs of the Empress Josephine, page 217, this self-same 36th regiment is mentioned as being amongst the most highly-favoured by Napoleon, and the following incident is narrated concerning it, and two others:—"One day, Bonaparte having particularly remarked the excellent order of two regiments of the line and one of light infantry, called the officers in front, from the colonel to the corporal, and expressed, in very flattering terms, his satisfaction with the appearance of the men. This distinction excited no jealousy, for all had received, or expected, commendation; but in the evening, a number of the soldiers of the favoured regiments—the 36th, 57th, and 10th, assembled at a public-house a little way out of Boulogne, which was also a favourite resort of the grenadiers of the guard. At first, everything went on in an amicable way, until certain couplets, composed on the events of the morning, happened to be recited by some of the inhabitants, who had mixed with the military. The grenadiers for a time maintained an ominous silence, but finally

nearly destroyed; upwards of two hundred soldiers, and their old colonel, covered with orders, lay dead in a small space, and the face of the hill was strewed with dead and wounded, which showed evident marks of the rapid execution done at this point; for Wallace never slackened his fire while a Frenchman was within his reach. He followed them down the edge of the hill, and then he formed his men in line, waiting for any orders he might receive, or for any fresh body that might attack him. Our gallant companions, the 45th, had an equal share in the glory of this short but murderous fight; they suffered severely, and the 88th lost nine officers and one hundred and thirty-five men. The 8th Portuguese also suffered, but in a less degree than the other two regiments, because their advance was not so rapid, but that regiment never gave way, nor was it ever broken; indeed there was nothing to break it, because the French were all in front of the 45th and 88th, and if they had broken the Portuguese they must have first broken the two British regiments, which it is well known they did not! The regiment

protested against such verses being sung in their presence; the line interposed in their turn; a quarrel arose, first of words afterwards some blows were exchanged. On this they instantly separated, each quietly passing a challenge to his nearest opponent. At four o'clock next morning, above two hundred grenadiers of the guard separately stole out to the place of meeting, where had assembled, in like manner, an equal number of the three regiments. To it they went, sword in hand, without a word of explanation, and for more than an hour continued the combat with fearful obstinacy. They would probably have been massacred to a man, had not General St. Hilaire, obtaining late information of this sanguinary quarrel, galloped to the spot with a regiment of cavalry. In the conflict, the guards lost ten, and the line thirteen men; but the wounded on both sides were much more numerous." This extract shows the description of troops that were opposed to the 45th and 88th, and which advanced, not "in a confused mass," but with the utmost order and determination.

of militia in their rear ran away most manfully; and if they were able to continue for any length of time the pace at which they commenced their flight, they might, I should say, have nearly reached Coimbra before all matters had been finally settled between us and the French. Two of their officers stood firm, and reported themselves in person to Wallace on the field of battle; so there could be no mistake about them, no more than there was about the rest of their regiment.

Meanwhile, Captains Dunne, Dansey, and Oates, had a severe struggle with the French troops that occupied the rocks. Dunne's serjeant (Brazil) killed a Frenchman by a push of his halbert, who had nearly overpowered his captain. Dansey was slightly wounded in four places, but it was said at the time that he killed three Frenchmen,—for he used a fire-lock. Oates suffered less, as the men opposed to him were chiefly composed of those that fled from Dunne and Dansey. Dunne's company of grenadiers, which at the onset counted about sixty, lost either two or three-and-thirty, and Dansey's and Oates' companies also suffered, but not to the same amount. The French troops that defended those rocks were composed of some of the 4th regiment and the Irish brigade; but though several of the latter were left wounded in the rocks, we could not discover one Irishman amongst them.

Lord Wellington, surrounded by his staff and some general officers, was a close observer of this attack. He was standing on a rising ground in rear of the 88th Regiment, and so close to that corps that Colonel Napier, of the 50th,—who was on leave of absence,—was wounded in the face by a musket shot, quite close to Lord Wellington. His Lordship passed the warmest encomiums on the troops engaged, and noticed the conduct of Captain Dansey in his despatch.

It has been said, and I believe truly, that Marshal Beresford, who was colonel of the 88th, expressed some uneasiness when he saw his regiment about to plunge into this unequal contest; but when they were mixed with Reynier's division, and putting them to flight down the hill, Lord Wellington, tapping Beresford on the shoulder, said to him, "Well, Beresford, look at them *now*!"

While these events which I have described were taking place, Picton in person took the command against the other division of Reynier's corps, and had a sharp dispute with it at the pass of Saint Antonio; but General Mackinnon, who led on the troops, never allowed it to make any head. A shower of balls from Arentschildt's battery deranged its deployment, and a few volleys from the 74th British and the Portuguese brigade of d'Champlemond, totally routed this column before it reached the top of the ridge.

As has been seen, the second column of Reynier's corps was met by Picton in person at Saint Antonio; but this attack was feeble in comparison with the one directed against Wallace, and, besides, Picton's force was vastly superior to that commanded by Wallace, while the troops opposed to him were little, if anything, more numerous. Picton had at this point five companies of the 45th, under Major Smyth, all the light companies of the third division, one company of the 60th Rifles, the 74th British and the Portuguese brigade of d'Champlemond, besides Arentschildt's battery of guns. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that Reynier made little or no impression on Picton's right.

The fifth division, commanded by General Leith, was in movement towards the contested point, and reached it in time either to take the fugitives in flank or to drive back any fresh body destined to support their defeated comrades. It made great efforts to join

Picton when he was attacked, but the advance was so rapid, the defeat so signal, and the distance—two miles, across a rugged mountain—so great, that Leith and his gallant division could only effect in part what they intended. The arrival of this force was, however, fully appreciated; for although the brigade of Lightburne, belonging to Picton's division, had not fired a shot, or been at all molested, and although the 74th Regiment was nearly at liberty, still, had another attack with fresh troops been made, Leith might have stood in Picton's shoes on the extreme right, while the latter could in a short time concentrate all his battalions, and either fight beside Leith or turn with vigour against any effort that might be made against his centre or left. But it would seem that no reserve was in hand—at all events none was thrown into the fight; and Massena gave up without a second trial that in which he lost many men and much glory!

While Picton, Mackinnon, Wallace, and d'Champlemond, and Leith's division, were occupied as I have described, the light division, under the gallant Robert Crawford, maintained a severe struggle against a large proportion of Ney's corps. Those French troops were driven down the hill with great loss, and the general of division, Simon, who headed and led the attack, was taken prisoner by the 52nd Regiment, and between two and three hundred unwounded men shared the fate of their general. The leading brigade of Leith's division put to flight some of the enemy who kept a hold of a rocky point on Picton's right, and had Picton been aware of their being there he might have cut off their retreat, while Leith attacked them in front and flank; but their numbers were scanty, and they might not have been aware of the fate of their companions, otherwise they would, in all probability, have got out of Leith's clutches before his arrival, for their remaining in the rocks could be

of no possible avail, and their force was too weak to hazard any serious attack on Picton's right. Indeed, they were routed by a battalion or two of Leith's division; and the entire British loss at this point did not count above forty or fifty. And thus ended a battle of which so many accounts have been given: all at variance with each other—and none more so than what I have just written.

It has been said that Picton directed the attack of the 45th, under Major Gwynne, the 88th, under Wallace, and the 8th Portuguese, under Douglas. Not one syllable of this is true. The conception of this attack, its brilliant execution, which ended in the total overthrow of Reynier's column, all belong to Colonel Alexander Wallace, of the 88th Regiment. At the time it was made Generals Picton and Mackinnon had their hands full at the pass of Saint Antonio, and were, in effect, as distant from Wallace as if they had been on the Rock of Lisbon; neither was General Lightburne to be seen. The nearest officer of rank to Wallace was Lord Wellington, who saw all that was passing, and never interfered *pro* or *con.*, which is a tolerably strong proof that his lordship thought no alteration for the better could be made, and Wallace had scarcely reformed his line, a little in front, and below the contested ground, when Lord Wellington, accompanied by Marshal Beresford and a number of other officers, galloped up, and passing round the left of our line, rode up to Wallace, and seizing him warmly by the hand, said—

"Wallace, I never witnessed a more gallant charge than that made just now by your regiment!"

Wallace took off his hat—but his heart was too full to speak. It was a proud moment for him; his fondest hopes had been realized, and the trouble he had taken to bring the 88th to the splendid state of perfection in which that corps then was, had been repaid in the

space of a few minutes by his gallant soldiers, many of whom shed tears of joy. Marshal Beresford addressed several of the soldiers by name, who had served under him when he commanded the regiment; and Picton, who at this time came up, expressed his satisfaction. Lord Wellington then took leave of us; and Beresford, shaking the officers by the hand, rode away with his lordship, accompanied by the officers about him. We were once more left to ourselves; the arms were piled, the wounded of all nations collected and carried to the rear, and in a short time the dead were left without a stitch of clothes to cover their bodies. All firing had ceased, except a few shots low down the hill on our right; and shortly after the picquets were placed in front a double allowance of spirits was served out to Wallace's men.

We had now leisure to walk about, and talk to each other on the events of the morning, and look at the French soldiers in our front. They appeared as leisurely employed cooking their rations as if nothing serious had occurred to them, which caused much amusement to our men, some of whom remarked that they left a few behind them that had got a "belly-full" already. The rocks which had been forced by the three companies of the 88th presented a curious and melancholy sight; one side of their base strewed with our brave fellows, almost all of them shot through the head, while in many of the niches were to be seen dead Frenchmen, in the position they had fought; while on the other side, and on the projecting crags, lay numbers who in an effort to escape the fury of our men were dashed to pieces in their fall!

Day at length began to close, and night found the two armies occupying the ground they held on the preceding evening; our army, as then, in utter darkness, that of the enemy more brilliant than the preceding night, which brought to our recollection the

remark of a celebrated general, when he saw bonfires through France after a signal defeat which the troops of that nation had sustained.—"Gad!" said the general, "those Frenchmen are like flint-stones—the more you beat them the more fire they make!"

Captain Seton, Ensign Owgan, and myself, with one hundred of the Connaught Rangers, formed the picquet in advance of that regiment, and immediately facing the outposts of the enemy in our front. The sentries of each, as is customary in civilized armies, although within half-shot range of each other, never fire except upon occasions of necessity. Towards midnight, Seton, a good and steady officer, went in front, for the third time, to see that the sentinels which he himself had posted were on the alert. He found all right; but upon his return to the main body he missed his way, and happening in the dark to get too close to a French sharpshooter, he was immediately challenged, but not thinking it prudent to make any noise, in the shape of reply or otherwise, he held his peace. Not so with the Frenchman, who uttered a loud cry to alarm his companions, and discharged the contents of his musket at Seton; the ball passed through his hat, but did no other injury, and he might have rejoiced at his escape, had the matter ended here; but the cry of the sentinel and the discharge of his musket alarmed the others, and one general volley from the line of outposts of both armies warned Seton that his best and safest evolution would be to sprawl flat on his face amongst the heath, with which the hill was copiously garnished. He did so, and as soon as the tumult had in a great degree abated, he got up on his hands and knees, and essayed to gain the ground which no doubt he regretted he had ever quit. He was nearing the picquet fast, when the rustling in the heath, increased by the awkward position in which he moved, put us on the *qui vive*. Owgan, who was a

dead shot with a rifle, and who on this day carried one, called out, in a low but clear tone, "I see you, and if you don't answer, you'll be a dead man in a second;" and he cocked his rifle, showing he meant to make good his promise.

Whether it was that Seton knew the temperament of the last speaker, or that the recollection of what he was near receiving caused by his obstinate taciturnity with the French soldier, is uncertain, but in this instance he completely changed his plan of tactics, and replied in a low and scarcely audible tone, "Owgan! don't fire—it's me." So soon as he recovered his natural and more comfortable position—for he was still "all-fours"—we congratulated him on his lucky escape, and I placed my canteen of brandy to his mouth; it did not require much pressing to prevail upon him to take a hearty swig, which indeed he stood much in need of.

The night passed over without further adventure or annoyance, and in the morning the picquets on both sides were relieved. The dead were buried without much ceremony, and the soldiers occupied themselves cleaning their arms, arranging their accoutrements, and cooking their rations. The enemy showed no great disposition to renew his attack, and a few of us obtained leave to go down to the village of Busaco, in order to visit some of our officers, who were so badly wounded as to forbid their being removed further to the rear. Amongst the number was the gallant Major Silver, of the 88th. He had been shot through the body, and though he did not think himself in danger, as he suffered no pain, it was manifest to the medical men he could not live many hours. He gave orders to his servant to leave him for a short time, and attend to his horses; the man did so, but on his return, in about a quarter of an hour, he found poor Silver lying on his right side as if he was asleep

—but he was dead! Silver was one of the best soldiers in the army, and was thanked by Colonel Donkin, who commanded the brigade at the battle of Talavera, for his distinguished bravery in that action. He was laid in a deep grave, in the uniform he had fought and died in.

A curious, and, as it turned out, a laughable circumstance, took place in this village about this time. A commissary, who had about a year before joined the division as a clerk, and was esteemed by all a good sort of fellow; became promoted, made money—a matter of course—rapidly, and, in the opinion of many, began not only to forget himself, but some of his old acquaintances also; it was even hinted that he gave one or two the "cut direct." Amongst those who felt most indignant was a young officer of the 88th, of the name of Heppenstal, a fellow who would have thought as little of shooting the said commissary as he would of eating one of his ration biscuits. Some angry words had passed between them while the third division was stationed at Pinhal, and it would seem from what just now followed, that neither had forgotten the circumstance. Heppenstal had rode down to the village, and hung the reins of his horse's bridle on a hook of the door of a house he had entered; the horse was quite out of the way of the street, but the commissary, it would seem, preferred the foot-path, and riding furiously between the horse's head and the wall, broke the reins, and was about to pass on when Heppenstal rushed out, and caught hold of the broken reins; the head-stall came off, leaving in Heppenstal's hands a very dangerous missile, which he made use of on the instant against the commissary. The bit of the bridle came in contact with the commissary's teeth, leaving him minus one or two; but he still kept his seat, and brandished a huge horsewhip at Heppenstal: a rushlight would have been of as much service to

him, for Heppenstal, a powerful man, and to whom danger was as nought, seized him by the right foot, and with one jerk emptied the saddle; the poor man fell on his face in the dust, and was not only made to "bite the bridle," but the "dust" also. By no means satisfied with the castigation he had given, Heppenstal rushed upon his fallen foe like an enraged tiger, and endeavoured to wrest the whip from his hand; but though the commissary lost his seat, he retained his presence of mind, and well knowing what he had to expect if the whip once got into his opponent's hands, held it with a death-like grasp. Powerful as Heppenstal was, he could not disentangle the whip, but he dragged the commissary a great distance along the street, and as the unfortunate man defended himself on his back, his uniform coat was torn to fritters. At last some officers and soldiers interposed, and succeeded in getting Heppenstal away, and thus relieved the unfortunate commissary from his disagreeable posture, and also from his disagreeable neighbour. Had the prize sought for, the whip, been gained, I am not prepared to say that the commissary would have served out rations for some time, and from the pertinacity with which he held it, I should say he was of my opinion. Heppenstal was killed shortly after, and died gloriously. I know not what became of the commissary.

The day after the action, some English troops passed through the town of Alcobaça, on their route to join the army; and this circumstance, coupled with our victory, led the inhabitants to suppose they, as well as their property, were perfectly safe; and the idea of removing the one or the other never once occurred to them. Their surprise and confusion was in consequence increased ten-fold, when they beheld our troops enter the town. Alcobaça was at that time a beautiful rich village, notwithstanding that it

supported a magnificent convent, and several hundred priests and friars. Those gentlemen, although rigid in their mode of living at times, know as well as any other class of people *how* to live, and having ample means of making out life at their disposal, it is not to be wondered at that the convent contained that which was far from unacceptable to us, namely quantities of provisions.

On our arrival in the town, the inhabitants, terrified at the possibility of being captured by the French, fled, leaving, in many instances, their houses in such haste, as not to allow themselves time to take away any thing, not even their silver forks and spoons, a luxury which almost the poorest family in Portugal enjoys. Those and other articles offered a strong temptation to our men to do that which they should not, *i. e.* possess themselves of whatever they found in those uninhabited mansions. Their doing so, to be sure, was a slight breach of discipline; but it was argued by the "friends of the measure," that Lord Wellington having directed the country parts, as well as the towns, to be laid waste, in order to distress the enemy as much as possible, the Portuguese were highly culpable in neither taking away their property nor destroying it. It would be almost superfluous to add, that an argument of so sound a nature, and delivered in the nick of time, had its due force; it in fact bore down all opposition, and those whose consciences at first felt any thing like a *qualm*, in a little time became more at ease, so that by the time the houses had been about half-sacked, there was not one who, so far from thinking it improper to do what he had done, would not have considered himself much to blame had he pursued a different line of conduct.

The priests, more cautious, or, perhaps, better informed, removed their valuables; but in all their hurry they did not forget that hospitality for which

they were proverbial. They left some of their brethren behind, who had a dinner prepared for our officers, and when their longer stay was useless to us, and might be attended with danger to themselves, they opened their different stores, and with a generous liberality, invited us to take whatever we wished for. Poor men! Their doing so showed more their goodness of heart than their knowledge of the world. Had they been a little longer acquainted with the lads that were now about to stand in their places, they would not have thought such *congè* necessary. As soon as those good men left the dwelling in which they had passed so many tranquil years, we began to avail ourselves of the permission granted us, and which decency forbade our taking advantage of sooner. Every nook was searched with anatomical precision; not even a corner cupboard was allowed to escape the scrutiny of the present inmates of the convent, who certainly were as unlike the former in their demeanour as in their costume.

In taking a survey of the different commodities with which this place was supplied, I had the good fortune, or, as it afterwards turned out, the *bad* fortune, to stumble upon several firkins of Irish butter. Unquestionably I never felt happier, because it was a luxury I had not tasted for months; but my servant, by a good-natured officiousness, so loaded my poor, half-starved, jaded mule with, not only butter, but every thing else he could lay his paw upon, that, unable to sustain the shameful burden which had been imposed upon him, he fell exhausted in endeavouring to scramble through a quagmire, and I lost not only the cargo with which he was laden, but the animal himself: however, I had the consolation to know that few of the articles cost me any thing, and he himself was a sort of windfall, having been *found* by my servant on the retreat.

The army continued its march upon Torres Vedras with little interruption from the enemy, and early in October we occupied our entrenched camp. This formidable position had its right at Alhandra, on the Tagus; its left rested on the part of the sea where the river Zizandra empties itself; and along its centre was a chain of redoubts, armed with cannon of different calibre; between these forts was a double and, in some instances, triple row of breastworks for the infantry, and the position might be considered faultless.

On the night of the 29th, the French army made that flank movement which obliged Lord Wellington to retire, and which is so well known as to render any detail from me unnecessary; and on that night we took our leave of the mountain of Busaco, and commenced our march to the Lines of Torres Vedras.

REMARKS ON THE BATTLE.

Never was a battle more differently described by those who have written upon it, and it is not an easy task for a reader who was not actually present, particularly with Picton's division, to come to a satisfactory conclusion as to who is right or who is wrong. My own opinion is, that he who has most evidence in his favour from those who from their observation on the spot are likely to know more of the matter than those who were far distant, has a fair claim to credence. As to Colonel Waller's account, that must be put out of the question altogether; it has been flatly contradicted by Sir Henry King, who commanded the 5th Infantry, which was one of the regiments belonging to Lightburne's, and Colonel King was second in command of that brigade; and if necessary, Sir Henry could be supported by the voices of all his soldiers who may be now living.

It has been positively asserted, and as pertinaciously adhered to, that the right of Picton's division was forced back; that the 8th Portuguese, under Douglas, were broken; and, in fine, that had it not been for the fifth division, the third would have been routed. Lord Wellington does not say so in his dispatch, and Picton, in his letter to his lordship, of 3rd November, 1810, positively says *such was not the case!* But supposing, for argument sake, that Douglas's regiment was broken, surely Lord Wellington must have seen it, and it would have been easy to have sent Lightburne's brigade, who were near them and quite unoccupied, to the support of Douglas; or, the 88th, hardly as they had been handled, could have sent a few companies to this point. Independent of all this, if Picton's troops were in the peril they are represented to have been at this moment, is it likely that Lord Wellington would have frittered away such precious time in complimenting Colonel Wallace and his regiment, while *almost the very ground he was standing on was in danger?* Or is it likely that Picton would have been quite at his ease with the 88th Regiment, riding about at his leisure, while any portion of his division was in danger of defeat? His own character as a general might have been lost by such neglect on his part, and the character of the battle at this point quite changed. Indeed, it is not possible for any one who was present to reconcile these accounts with what they themselves remember to have seen.

Much stress has been laid on the attack of Leith's division, and I have no reason to doubt that those who support this opinion do no more than give this gallant division their due merit; but nevertheless the dispatch of Lord Wellington, and the positive contradiction of Picton, have great weight with me

as regards the overthrow of the third division. One thing is however tolerably clear as regards Leith's division and the attack of Wallace. If Colonel Napier has given the former more importance than it merits —and I by no means presume to say he has—*he most certainly has not fallen into the same error with the latter;* but he is not to be blamed, as he conceived he wrote upon unquestionable authority. Howbeit, the matter stands as regards Lightburne's brigade and the attack of Wallace precisely as I have said; the late Sir Thomas Picton has contradicted the defeat of the right of his division, and Colonel Napier's brilliant account of the part the light division took in this battle, is no doubt perfectly correct, as is, indeed, everything he writes in his splendid "History of the Peninsular War," when he writes from his own knowledge or from better information than that received by him from Colonel Waller.

I have before said that, immediately after the defeat of the French column by the 45th and 88th, Lord Wellington remained some time with Colonel Wallace and his regiment, and I think it must be clear to any person that had this attack, said to have been made so close to where his lordship was—not many yards from us—that not only Lord Wellington but the soldiers and officers must have heard a shot or two; but not the sound of one ever reached our ears; I must therefore conclude, if the attack ever was made, it was confined to the use of the bayonet; for, beyond all question, no firing could have taken place so near us without its being distinctly heard. I may, however, be wrong, and will not say, like Colonel Waller, that this charge did or did not take place—I only say, that I think it was morally impossible that such a contest so near us could have occurred without our hearing it.

I believe there has been more contradiction, more mis-statements, and more correspondence on this battle, than any that took place in the Peninsula.

There are one or two points, however, on which there can be no difference of opinion; but they are material ones, nevertheless. The first relates to Lightburne's brigade; the second to Colonel Napier's account of the attack made by the French column; but more particularly the *order* in which this column was in, and its fitness or unfitness for battle. If, as Colonel Napier says, they "were quite spent with their previous efforts," it would be well to know *what* those "previous exertions" were; and if those men were in the exhausted state they are described to have been, the 45th and 88th, although those two battalions routed four times their own numbers, did not merit the praise they received from Lord Wellington, or what I have said about them; but the fact is, as I have before stated, the column opposed to Wallace and Gwynne were composed of some of the best troops of the French army; and so far from being a "confused mass," as Colonel Napier has said, they made their gallant attack in the most perfect order, and made it like men resolved to conquer. Their soldiers, posted in the rocks, where they had been for some time before they were attacked and forced by the three companies of the 88th, fought to the last, and scarcely a man of those brave veterans escaped unhurt; and, to sum up all, the four companies of the 45th and 88th regiments, of whom so little is said, lost about four times as many men as the entire fifth division!

The loss of Leith's troops in this affair of theirs was two officers, and between forty and fifty soldiers. Picton's loss was, British, twenty-two officers, and three hundred and nineteen soldiers; while the Por-

tuguese belonging to his division lost fifteen officers and two hundred and fifty men—making a total of thirty-seven officers, and five hundred and sixty-nine non-commissioned and privates. This in itself is strong evidence as to the nature of the contest in which the two divisions were engaged, but I think it necessary to give the authorities to bear me out in what I have written, which will be found in the appendix to the present volume.

CHAPTER VII.

Occupation of the Lines of Torres Vedras—An Irish interpreter—Death of the Marquis de la Romana—Retreat of Massena's army from Portugal—Indulgence of Lord Wellington—The oldest subaltern in the world.

THE astonishment of the French general was great, when he beheld the reception prepared for him; and his friend the Duke d'Abrantes must have been lowered in his estimation not a little, because it is well known that, contrary to the advice of several able officers, Massena was overruled by Junot, who assured him those heights could be easily carried.

After numerous *reconnoissances*, the French Marshal came to the resolution of renouncing any hope of success from an assault; and his army formed a line blockade, with its right at Otta, its centre at Alenquer, and its left at Villa Franca. But it must have been a matter of deep regret to him to have learned, when too late, that by this useless advance of his, he exposed upwards of three thousand of his wounded, in the battle of Busaco, left at Coimbra, to be massacred by the Portuguese militia and peasantry.

For the space of a month the French army remained, inactive in their wretched cantonments, their supply of provisions growing every day more scanty; their horses, reduced to the necessity of sub-

sisting on the vine twigs, died by hundreds; and the soldiers, pining from disease, became discontented and discouraged. In consequence, the desertions increased with their increasing wants, and it appeared very evident that matters could not long continue in the state they were the beginning of November.

Although our situation was, in every respect, better than that of the enemy, we were far from comfortable. Our huts, from want of any good materials to construct them, were but a weak defence against the heavy rains which fell at this time. We had no straw to serve for thatch, and the heath, which we were obliged to use as a substitute, though it looked well enough when in full leaf and blossom, and was a delightful shelter in fine weather, became a wretched protection against the torrents that soon after inundated us. The inside of our habitation presented an appearance as varied as it was uncomfortable; at one end might be seen a couple of officers, with their cloaks thrown about them, snoring on a truss of straw, while over their heads hung their blankets, which served as a kind of inner wall, and for a time stopped the flood that deluged the parts of the hut not so defended; but this, by degrees, becoming completely saturated with rain, not only lost its original appearance, but what was worse, its original usefulness; for the water, dripping down from the edges, gradually made its way towards the centre of the blanket, and thus, by degrees, it assumed a shape not unlike the parachute of a balloon, until at length being overpowered with its own weight, and, either giving way at the point or bottom, or breaking its hold from the twigs which feebly held it at top, overwhelmed those it was intended to protect, and in the space of a minute more effectually drenched them than the heaviest fall of rain would have accomplished in several hours. In another corner lay some one else,

who, for want of a better, substituted a sheet or an old tablecloth as a temporary defence; but this was even more disastrous than the blanket, for from the nature of its texture, and the imperfect manner in which it was from necessity pitched, it made but a poor stand; it soon performed the functions of a filtering machine, and with equal effect, though less force, was to the full as unserviceable as the blanket. Others more stout and convivial, sat up smoking cigars and drinking brandy punch, waiting for the signal to proceed to our alarm-post, a duty which the army performed every morning two hours before day. This was by no means a pleasant task; scrambling up a hill of mud, and standing shivering for a couple of hours in the dark and wet was exceedingly uncomfortable; but I don't remember to have heard one single murmur; we all saw the necessity of such a line of conduct, and we obeyed it with cheerfulness.

Reinforcements continued to arrive from home, and the Marquis de la Romana joined us with ten thousand Spaniards, but Lord Wellington nevertheless continued to strengthen our position. A second line of defence was established in rear of the one we occupied; its right on the river Tagus, and its left at Ericeira; an intrenched camp was also formed near Fort St. Julien, at the mouth of the Tagus, so that in the event of any disaster occurring to the army which might render its embarkation necessary, this camp would effectually cover our movement. Its distance from Lisbon was sufficient to avoid the inconveniences which would arise from an operation of the kind performed in the vicinity of a great city; and had we met with the greatest reverse we could not be more guarded in our conduct: but there is a difference between *caution* and fear, and *apprehension of danger* is not to be termed pusillanimity. Yet much as all these precautions occupied the mind of his lordship, they were

as nought compared to the strife he was engaged in with the opposition in the Portuguese ministry, and the civil—anything but civil to him—authority!

On the 14th of November Massena broke up his camp, and on that night his army was in full march upon Santarem; ours made a corresponding movement, and the head-quarters were on the 18th established at Cartaxo.

It was the general opinion in the army, that a battle in the neighbourhood of Santarem would be the result of those manœuvres, and this opinion was strengthened by Lord Wellington making a *reconnoissance* on the 19th; but although those expectations were disappointed, the situation of the troops was much improved, and their comforts increased. Our division occupied the town of Torres Vedras, while the other corps were in the villages of Alenquer, Azambujo, and Alcoentre. The French army foraged the country between Santarem and the river Zezere. Santarem was much strengthened, and the two armies were thus circumstanced in November, 1810.

Our fatigues being for a time at an end, we occupied ourselves in such pursuits as each of us fancied. We had no unnecessary drilling, nor were we tormented with that greatest of all *bores* to an officer at any time, but particularly on service, uniformity of dress. The consequence was that every duty was performed with cheerfulness; the army was in the highest state of discipline; and those gentlemen who had, or fancied they had, a taste for leading the fashion, had now a fine opportunity of bringing their talents into play.

With such latitude it is not to be wondered at that our appearance was not *quite* as uniform as some general officers would approve of: but Lord Wellington was a most indulgent commander; he never harrassed us with reviews, or petty annoyances, which so far from promoting discipline, or doing good in any way,

has a contrary effect. A corporal's guard frequently did the duty at head-quarters; and every officer who chose to purchase a horse might ride on a march. Provided we brought our men into the field well appointed, and with sixty rounds of good ammunition each, he never looked to see whether their trousers were black, blue, or grey; and as to ourselves, we might be rigged out in all the colours of the rainbow if we fancied it. The consequence was, that scarcely any two officers were dressed alike! Some with grey braided coats, others with brown; some again liked blue; while many from choice, or perhaps necessity, stuck to the "old red rag." Overalls, of all things, were in vogue, and the comical appearance of a number of infantry officers loaded with leather bottoms to their pantaloons, and huge chains suspended from the side buttons, like a parcel of troopers, was amusing enough. Some had such a *penchant* for leather, that their pantaloons were covered with it from bottom to top; and it often occurred to me, while surveying the well-leathered trousers, of those modern heroes, that, notwithstanding the great change in military tactics, since in olden time the "town was threatened with a siege," they still clung to the forcible opinion delivered by the currier on that ever memorable occasion. Quantities of hair, a regular brutus, a pair of mustachioes, and screw brass spurs, were essential to a first rate *Count*, for so were our dandies designated. The "cut down" hat, exactly a span in height, was another *rage;* this burlesque on a *chapeau* was usually out-topped by some extraordinary-looking feather; while again, others wore their hats without any feather at all—and indeed this was the most rational thing they did. In the paroxism of a wish to be singularly singular, a friend of mine shaved all the hair off the crown of his head, and *he* was decidedly the most *outré*-looking man amongst us, and consequently the

happiest. I myself had a hankering to be a *Count*, and had I half as much money to spare as time, I would not have been outdone by any man in the army, so I hit upon the expedient of cutting my hat down a couple of inches lower than any one else: *this* I thought would be better than nothing. Lieutenant Heppenstal, of the 88th Regiment, was nearly falling a sacrifice to the richness of his dress. He belonged to the light troops of our army at the battle of Busaco, and was warmly engaged with the advance of the enemy. He was a man of the most determined bravery and gigantic strength, and more than once became personally engaged with the French riflemen. At one time, carried away by his daring impetuosity, he pursued his success so far as to be nearly mixed with the enemy; a number of Portuguese Caçadores coming up at this moment, mistook him for a French general officer, and attempted to make him a prisoner; a scuffle ensued, in which he lost the skirts of his frock-coat; and it was not until an explanation took place, that he was enabled to join his regiment in this laughable trim—his beautiful gold-tagged frock being converted into a regular spencer.

Poor Heppenstal! It was his first appearance under fire, and it was not difficult for those who witnessed his too gallant *debut*, to foresee that his career of glory would be short. He carried a rifle, and his unerring aim brought down many a man on the morning I am speaking of; but he did not long survive the praises so justly bestowed on him; and it will soon be my painful duty to record his death.

Dress, however, with its attractions, by no means engrossed all our thoughts; some were fond of shooting, and those whose tastes lay that way, had plenty of sport, as the country abounded in game; others took to horse-racing, and here was a fine opportunity for the lovers of the turf and of dress, to display their

knowledge in both. Jockeys, adorned with all colours, were to be seen on the course, and the harlequin-like appearance of these equestrians was far from unpleasing. Some of the races were admirably contested, and afforded us as much gratification as those of Epsom and Doncaster do to the visitants of those receptacles of rank and fashion.

There were a few who applied themselves to learning the Portuguese language, but these instances were rare, and seldom attended with much success, and for this reason—that we had no native society sufficiently agreeable to compensate for the purgatorial punishment we were obliged to endure when approaching the Portuguese females. The best dressed *gigot à la Française* never more profusely savoured of garlick than did the breaths of those *fair ones;* and in many instances a few straggling *piolhos* might be seen traversing the greasy foreheads of those odorous senhoras; and as to the men, there was nothing to induce us to have any intercourse with them.

Great inconvenience in making ourselves understood was in consequence often felt, and a laughable circumstance of this sort took place between a friend of mine and a shoemaker, in the village of Rio Mayor. He left his boots, his only pair, to be mended, and understood they were to be put in serviceable condition for a *crusado novo*, less than three shillings of our money. Next day, on entering the shop, the man made two or three efforts to make the officer comprehend how well the work had been done; but it was all to no purpose, for my friend, not understanding one word of what was said, conceived the fellow wanted to impose a higher price upon him, and got into a violent rage. An Irish soldier, belonging to the 88th Regiment, of the name of Larracy, a shoemaker, who had been working for the Portuguese, a

common indulgence allowed to the tradesmen of the army, came up to his officer, and thus accosted him.

"Ah! your honour, I see you can't talk to him, but *lave* him to me; I've been working in his shop these three weeks, and, saving your presence, there isn't a bigger rascal in all Ireland; but I can *spake* as well as himself now, and I'm up to his ways."

Larracy thus became interpreter and *mediator*, and it would be difficult to say in which character he best acquitted himself. Possessing no knowledge whatever of the language, notwithstanding his repeated assurances that he could talk it *nately*, he brought that happy talent for invention, for which the Irish most undeniably stand unrivalled, into play. Seizing one of the boots he approached his employer, and suiting the word to the action, addressed him in the following words:—

"Si, senhor!* Quanto the munnee, for the solee, the heelee, and the nailee?"

The astonishment pourtrayed in the countenance of the Portuguese baffles all description; he surveyed Larracy from head to foot, and with much gravity of manner replied, "*Eu nào entendo-o que vós me dizeis.*"† "And sure I'm telling him so," rejoined Larracy. "What does the fellow say?" demanded my friend—"What does he say?—What does he say, is it? He says he put a fine pair of welts to your boots, sir; (and it's true for him!) and that your honour will have to give him a dollar (*about two shillings more than was demanded by the Portuguese!*) but just only *lave* him to me, and give *me* the dollar, and if I don't *bate* him down in the price, never believe a word that I'll tell your honour again; and I'll carry home your boots

* Yes, sir.

† I do not understand a word you are saying to me.

for you, and bring you the account in *rotation*, (by which he meant in writing,) and the change of the dollar."—"Oh! never mind, you are an honest fellow, Larracy, and keep the change for your trouble; but you may tell your employer it is the last job he shall ever do for me."—"Och! sure I told your honour he was a blackguard," grinned Larracy, escorting his officer to the door, and putting the dollar in his pocket.

Every day the army assumed a more imposing attitude, and early in December, our brigade advanced as far as Tagarro, where General Picton established his head quarters. The enemy was not inactive. The ninth corps stationed at Sabugal, made a movement upon Castello Branco and Punhete, and General Drouet, penetrating the pass of Marcella formed a junction with the Prince of Esling, whose army, by this reinforcement, notwithstanding its previous losses, counted seventy thousand men and upwards. With such a force at his disposal, it was but natural to suppose Massena would have felt anxious to revenge the disgrace of his defeat at Busaco, and his subsequent blunder in advancing to the lines of Lisbon; but the contrary was the case, and the "*favourite Child of Victory*," (as the Emperor Napoleon used to style him,) seemed to have lost his former impetuosity, and the laurels which the hero of Rivoli and Aspern had so hardly won, were unquestionably on the eve of being torn from his brow by the general, whom the "*Moniteur*," a few months before, had given a *friendly hint*, that the French imperial army were not an army of Sepoys! Indeed, ever since the fall of Almeida, Massena did little to sustain the high reputation he had earned; he displayed neither the qualities of a Marcellus or a Fabius, and he disappointed us as much as he did his master. He might have cantoned his army on the

Mondego and Douro, in the neighbourhood of Lamego, Vizeu, and Coimbra, where their situation would have been far better than cooped up in unhealthy half-burnt villages, such as those they occupied near the lines of Torres Vedras, and his superior cavalry would have given him the option of choosing his own field of battle or declining ours.

During this time of comparative inactivity, there were few lives lost. On our side, Captain Fenwick, an officer of first-rate merit, was killed at Obidos in an affair of out-posts, and the French lost a general of high promise, of the name of Saint Croix, in the neighbourhood of Villa Franca. This officer was making a *reconnoissance*, when a round shot from one of our gun-boats, that were stationed in the Tagus, cut him in two. His loss was much lamented in the French army, and no person in ours felt any gratification in hearing of the death of a fine young man, so prematurely and ingloriously cut off. He was little more than one-and-twenty, yet he commanded Massena's advance-guard in the passage of the Danube in 1809, and was his greatest favourite; it was he who anticipated our movement on Sardaõ after the battle of the 27th of September at Busaco. About this time the Duke d'Abrantes received a wound in his face from one of our riflemen, while reconnoitring our post at Rio Mayor; and *we* had to lament the death of the Marquis de la Romana. He had passed the greater part of his life in France, but was one of the staunchest supporters of his country's cause.

When the alliance between France and Spain was closest, the Marquis co-operated in the general system of war established by Napoleon against England, and he commanded a division of troops destined to act in the north of Europe; but the moment the situation in which his country was placed was made

known to him, he did not hesitate upon the part he was to act in the great drama about to be performed. A favourable opportunity occurring, he embarked his troops on board some English transports, and landed in Spain in the year 1808. From this period, up to the moment of his death, he promoted, as much as in him lay, the great cause for which we were fighting—not the liberty of Spain alone, but of Europe. His death was most sudden; he had but just left his house, when he was seized with an apopletic fit, and he died immediately.

The day before his death he sent General Mendizabel to the relief of Olivenza and Badajoz, at this time invested by Marshal Mortier. The Spanish general arrived too late to be of any use to the former, and he lost almost all his army in endeavouring to relieve the latter.

Posting his army on the right bank of the Guadiana, under the guns of St. Christoval, which was but a poor point *d'appui*, considering the description of troops General Mendizabel commanded, and those which were about to assail him, he thought himself perfectly secure. A few hours, however, undeceived him. On the following morning he was attacked in his position, and his army giving way at the first discharge, were totally overthrown, the fugitives either saving themselves under the guns of Badajoz, or taking flight towards Elvas, gained the latter fortress in the course of the day. Badajoz was forthwith invested, and in less than three weeks fell.

While in the other parts of the Peninsula much activity prevailed, with us all was quiet; and although the season was advancing towards spring, there was no appearance of our commencing the offensive, and conjectures innumerable were the consequence. Promotion, that great planet whose influence more or less affected us all, was perpetually on the *tapis*.

There were some among us of a desponding cast; they would say, "Have we not lost Almeida, Rodrigo, and now, though last not least, Badajoz? And should we be obliged to evacuate the Peninsula, good-by to promotion." Others there were who held a different opinion, and, resting their hopes on some fortunate "turn-up," expected ere long to have the enviable title of captain attached to their name. To this class I belonged, and as it was the most numerous in the army, it was of consequence the most clamorous on this head.

The life of a subaltern, in what Miss Mac-Tab would call a marching regiment, where many of us, and I myself for one, had little except our pay, is a perpetual scene of irritating calculation from the 24th of one month to the 24th of the next. No matter under what circumstances, or in what quarter of the globe the subaltern is placed, his *first* thought points towards that powerful magnet the *twenty-fourth*—his *next* to promotion.

The 24th has scarcely passed, when the same routine is pursued, every hour increasing in interest according to the immediate wants of the calculator; and time rolls on, either rapidly or slowly, in the exact ratio with the strength or weakness of his purse. The moment he receives his pay he discharges his bills, and by the time he has got about half way into the first week of the next month, he has little occasion for a knowledge of Cocker to enable him to calculate his money.

The period generally reckoned on by a subaltern to get his company, in a good fighting regiment—that is to say, one that has the good luck to be in the thick and thin of what is going on, for all regiments fight alike for that matter, was from five to six years. The "extra shilling" was rarely heard of, and never thought of but with disgust.

It was during the time of those conflicting opinions, that an old German officer thought fit to put in his claim. He conjectured that an opportunity of witnessing the decapitation of his captain was not likely to occur, and fearing, if he let the present moment pass, he might be a subaltern for the residue of his life, resolved to memorialise. I was favoured with the rough draft, and upon perusing it, was at a loss whether most to admire the simplicity with which it was drawn up, or the forcible pithiness with which the veteran detailed his services; and as it was unlike any memorial I ever saw, or, indeed, ever heard of before, I shall give it *verbatim*; it ran thus:—

"TO THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

"The memorial of Kroppf Hoffinger,

"Sheweth,

"That when your memorialist was seven years a lieutenant, you gave him an extra shilling.

"On the 16th of last September he was fourteen years a lieutenant, and he hopes you will give him another extra shilling.

"Your memorialist has seen some service, having been present in fifteen general engagements, sixty-four skirmishes, and thirteen flying camps; and he farther takes the liberty of hinting that he is the oldest subaltern in the world."

CHAPTER VIII.

Excesses of the French during their retreat—Battle of Fuentes d'Onore—Sir E. Pakenham, Colonel Wallace, and the 88th Regiment.

THE retreat of the French army from Portugal commenced on the night of the 5th of March 1811, and was marked by acts more suited to a horde of barbarians than a European army. On the fact being ascertained at our head-quarters, we were put in their track, which, when once found, it would have been a difficult matter to lose; the whole country through which they passed being a vast extent of burning ruins. Not a town, not a village, and rarely a cottage escaped the general conflagration. The beautiful town of Leyria was left a heap of ruins; Pombal shared the same fate, and the magnificent convent of Alcobaça was burned to the ground; two of the finest organs in Europe were destroyed by this wanton act, and a century will be insufficient to repair the evils which a few months inflicted on this unfortunate country.

Some marauders, who left their respective columns to explore those parts of the country, which from their mountainous and rocky situation were impassable for an army encumbered with baggage and cannon, surprised the unfortunate peasantry in those

retreats which they had hitherto considered secure, and not only plundered them of their little remnant of provisions, but massacred all those who attempted to defend their property. The whole country, consequently, with but few exceptions, fell a prey to the fugitives of this ill-fated expedition, who, in their turn, suffered from the system of retaliation which was practised by the people whenever an opportunity offered itself.

Scenes of the most revolting nature were the natural attendants on such a barbarous mode of warfare, and scarcely a league was traversed by our army, in its advance, without our eyes being shocked by some frightful spectacle. The French army were doubtless much exasperated against the Portuguese nation, in consequence of the manner in which they destroyed what would have contributed to the comforts of the former, who had been half-starved for six months in consequence of this conduct on the part of the people, and now, after so many privations, having a long retreat before them, with a scanty allowance of provisions in their havresacks, it is more to be lamented than wondered at, that the march of the French troops was accompanied by many circumstances which were disgraceful to them.

On the 9th of March our advanced-guard came up with the rear of the enemy, commanded by Marshal Ney, in the neighbourhood of Pombal; the light division was warmly engaged, and some charges of cavalry took place on the high ground near the castle; but the infantry of our division (the third) arrived too late to support the light, and no decisive result was the consequence. Massena continued his retreat that night and next day; but on the 11th we found him posted on a rising ground near the village of Redinha; our army formed in line on the plain, and an action of some consequence was expected; but

the French marshal was so pressed in front, while his left was vigorously attacked, that it was not without sustaining a severe loss he effected his passage across the river Redinha.

On the 15th we surprised their covering division while in the act of cooking near the village of Foz d'Arouce; they retreated in the greatest hurry, leaving several camp kettles full of meat behind them. As we approached the town, the road leading to it was covered with a number of horses, mules, and asses, all maimed; but the most disgusting sight was about fifty of the asses floundering in the mud, some with their throats half cut, while others were barbarously houghed, or otherwise injured. What the object of this proceeding meant I never could guess; the poor brutes could have been of no use to us, or indeed any one else, as I believe they were unable to have travelled another league; the meagre appearance of these creatures, with their back-bones and hips protruding through their hides, and their mangled and bleeding throats, produced a general feeling of disgust and commiseration.

The village of Foz d'Arouce was warmly contested, and more than once taken and retaken. Night put a stop to this affair, in which we sustained a loss of about four hundred men; the enemy lost nearly a thousand *hors de combat;* and, as usual, taking advantage of the night, and the numerous incidents which a retreating army possesses through such a country as Portugal—and commanded by an officer of such experience and ability as Marshal Ney—continued their retreat upon Guarda, having destroyed the bridge on the river Ceira as they retired.

The army did not lose any officer of rank in the affair of Foz d'Arouce, but the service sustained a loss in Lieutenant Heppenstal—a young man, who, had he lived, would have been an ornament to a pro-

fession for which Nature seemed to have destined him. . He was known to be one of the bravest men in the army, but on this occasion his usual spirits deserted him. He moved along silent, inattentive, and abstracted—a brisk firing in our front soon roused all his wonted energy, and he advanced with his men apparently cheerful as ever; turning to a brother officer he said, "You will laugh at what I am going to say; you know I am not afraid to die, but I have a certain feeling that my race is nearly run." "You jest," said his friend. "No, I don't," was his reply; they shook hands, the light troops advanced, and in a few minutes the brave Heppenstal was a corpse. His presentiment was too just, and though I had heard of instances of the kind before, this was the first that came under my immediate observation. I ran up to the spot where he lay; he was bleeding profusely; his breast was penetrated by two bullets, and a third passed through his forehead. His death was singular, and it appeared as if he was resolved to fulfil the destiny that he had marked out for himself. Our light troops were gradually retreating on their reinforcements, and were within a few paces of the columns of infantry; his men repeatedly called out to him to retire with the rest, but he, either not hearing, or not attending to what they said, remained, with his back against a pine-tree, dealing out death at every shot. Pressed as we were for time, we dug him a deep grave at the foot of the tree where he so gallantly lost his life, and we laid him in it without form or ceremony.

Nothing particular occurred after the action of Foz d'Arouce, until our arrival at Guarda; as usual, we met with groups of murdered peasantry and of French soldiers. At the entrance of a cave, amidst these rocky mountains, lay an old man, a woman, and two young men, all dead. This cave, no doubt,

had served them as an asylum the preceding winter, and appearances warranted the supposition that these poor creatures, in a vain effort to save their little store of provisions, fell victims to the ferocity of their murderers. The clothes of the two young peasants were torn to atoms, and bore ample testimony that they did not lose their lives without a struggle to preserve them; the hands of one were dreadfully mangled, as if in a last effort to save his life he had grasped the sword which ultimately dispatched him; beside him lay his companion, his brother, perhaps, covered with wounds; and a little to the right was the old man. He lay on his back with his breast bare; two large gashes were over his heart, and the back part of his head was beaten to pieces. Near him lay an old rusty bayonet fixed on a pole, which formerly served as a goad for oxen, and one of his hands grasped a bunch of hair, torn, no doubt, from the head of the assassin; the old woman was in all probability strangled, as no wound appeared on her body.

At some distance from this spot were two French soldiers of the 4th of the line,—their appearance was frightful. They had been wounded by our advance, and their companions either being too much occupied in providing for their own safety to think of them, or, their situation being too hopeless to entertain an idea of their surviving, they were abandoned to the fury of the peasants, who invariably dodged on the flanks or in the rear of our troops. These poor wretches were surrounded by half a dozen Portuguese, who, after having plundered them, were taking that horrible vengeance too common during this contest. On the approach of our men they dispersed, but, as we passed on, we could perceive them returning like vultures that have been scared away from their prey for the moment, but who return to it again

with redoubled voraciousness. Both the Frenchmen were alive, and entreated us to put an end to their sufferings. I thought it would have been humane to do so, but Napoleon and Jaffa flashed across me, and I turned away from the spot.

During the entire of those operations, which lasted two or three and twenty days, the events which took place, save those I mention, are not worth recording. The light division, so celebrated even at this early period of the war, was ever in advance; it had almost all the fighting as well as the fag; while ours (the third) had plenty of fag but scarcely any fighting. The army, however, soon afterwards styled us "the fighting division," a title we never forfeited, for from our first formation as a division until the peace of 1814, that is to say five years, during which period we fought six general battles, stormed two towns, and were engaged in numberless minor combats, we never sustained a reverse.

On the 30th of March, General Picton arrived before Guarda, his approach to that town was not only unperceived, but seemed unexpected, having advanced to within two gun-shots of the town without meeting a vidette. Such conduct on the part of the French general was not only culpable in the extreme, but showed the greatest presumption and confidence, because, had we a brigade of guns with us, and a few hundred cavalry, the five thousand men that occupied Guarda would have been forced to lay down their arms.* Fortunately for them, we had neither the one nor the other; and instead of being in a condition to attack the town, we had the mortification to witness the French getting out of it,

* It may be asked why we had not one, or both. I cannot say why we had not. The fault lay somewhere, but whether in the general of division, or the commander-in-chief, I cannot pretend to say.

bag and baggage, as quick as they could. The scene of confusion that the streets presented was great; infantry, artillery, and baggage, men, women, and children, all mixed pell-mell together, hurrying to the high road leading to Sabugal. Our cavalry came up shortly after the enemy had evacuated the place, but too late to do much good. Some prisoners and baggage, and a few head of cattle, were captured; and we took up our quarters in the town for the night.

On the 3rd of April we again, and for the last time in Portugal, encountered the enemy at Sabugal. The light division had a gallant affair with the corps of General Reynier, and, though greatly outnumbered, they not only succeeded in forcing the position, but captured a howitzer and several prisoners; the third division soon after reached the ground, and its leading battalions, especially the 5th regiment, had deployed, and, having thrown in a heavy fire, were advancing with the bayonet, when a violent hail-storm came on, and completely hid the two armies from each other. Reynier hurried his divisions off the field, and this unlooked-for event snatched a brilliant exploit from us, as the total overthrow of this corps would have been in all probability the result.

The French suffered severely, but they never fought better; so rapidly did they fire, that instead of returning their ramrods, they stuck them in the ground for expedition, and continued to fight, until overpowered by our men, who are certainly better at close fighting than long shot.

The enemy fought their howitzer well, and almost all the gunners lay dead about it: a young artillery officer was the first I took notice of; his uniform was still on him, an unusual thing; he wore a blue frock-coat; across his shoulder hung his cartouche-box;

and the middle of his forehead was pierced by a musket ball. His features, which were beautiful, showed, nevertheless, a painful distortion, and it was evident that the shock which deprived him of life, though momentary, was one of excruciating agony—beside him lay one of the gunners, whose appearance was altogether different from that of his officer. A round shot had taken off his thigh a few inches below the groin, and his death, though not as instantaneous, seemed to be void of pain. The bare stump exhibited a shocking sight,—the muscles, arteries, and flesh, all hanging in frightful confusion, presented the eye with a horrid sample of the effects of those means made use of by man for his own destruction; the ramrod of the gun was near him; his back rested against one of the wheels; and there was that placid look in his countenance which would lead you to think he had sat himself down to rest.

The wounded having been all removed, and the enemy continuing their retreat, we *bivouacked* on the ground they had occupied at the commencement of the action, and the next day we went into cantonments. The French re-crossed the Agueda, and Portugal was, with the exception of Almeida, freed from their presence, after having occupied it for nearly eight months, and having inflicted on the inhabitants every misery it is possible to conceive.

Four weeks had scarcely elapsed when we were again called into action. On the 2nd of May, Marshal Massena passed the river Agueda at Rodrigo, and moved upon Almeida, in order to supply it with provisions. He had left a garrison of three thousand men in that fortress, commanded by General Brennier, in whom he placed much confidence. The French Marshal stationed his army on the river Azava, in the neighbourhood of Carpio, Espeja, and Gallegos; and next day (the 3rd) made a movement

on Almeida. Lord Wellington made a corresponding movement, and our army occupied a fine line of battle; its right at Nava d'Aver, the centre at Fuentes d'Onore, and the left resting on the ruins of the Fort de la Conception; in our front ran the little stream of Onore. General Pack's brigade of Portuguese invested Almeida.

This position, though a desirable one in many respects, was not faultless; there were parts of it of difficult access; from the Fort of Conception, on our extreme left, to our centre at Fuentes d'Onore, was mostly a rugged ravine, but the ground between Fuentes d'Onore and Posobello, and between Posobello and Nava d'Aver, was a continued flat, and afforded a fine field for the French cavalry to manœuvre upon; they were much superior to ours in number, and thither it was supposed the enemy would direct his efforts, but the contrary was the case. Without waiting to ascertain the strength or weakness of the position, Marshal Massena, with that impetuosity which had formerly characterised him, ordered the village of Fuentes d'Onore to be carried; and to make his success certain, the entire of the sixth corps was employed in the attack. The town was at this time occupied by some of our first division, consisting of the Highland regiments, supported by others of the line, and the light companies of the first and third division, commanded by Major Dick, of the 42nd Highlanders, and Colonel Williams, of the 60th. The village was taken and re-taken several times, and night found both armies occupying a part each.

Massena perceiving that the obstacles opposed to his carrying this point, which he considered the key of our position, were too great for him to surmount, employed himself the entire of the 4th in reconnoitring our line, and in making preparations for the battle which was to take place the following day. On our

side we were not inactive: the avenues leading to Posobello and Fuentes were barricaded in the best manner the moment would allow; temporary defences were constructed at the heads of the different streets, and trenches dug here and there, as a protection against the impetuous attacks expected from the cavalry of General Mont Brun. We lay down to rest perfectly assured that every necessary precaution had been taken by our General; and as to the result of the battle, we looked upon that as certain, a series of engagements with the enemy having taught us to estimate our own prowess; and being a good deal overcome with the heat of the weather, we lay down to rest, and slept soundly.

Day had scarcely dawned, when the roar of artillery and musketry announced the attack of Fuentes d'Onore and Posobello. Five thousand men filled the latter village, and after a desperate conflict carried it with the bayonet. General Mont Brun, at the head of the French cavalry, vigorously attacked the right of our army; but he was received with much steadiness by our seventh division, which, though it fought in line, repulsed the efforts made to break it, and drove back the cavalry in confusion. The light troops, immediately in front of the first and third divisions, were in like manner charged by bodies of the enemy's horse, but by manœuvres well executed, in proper time, these attacks were rendered as fruitless as the main one against the right of our army. The officer who commanded this advance, either too much elated with his success, or holding the efforts of the enemy in too light a point of view, unfortunately extended his men once more to the distance at which light troops usually fight; the consequence was fatal. The enemy, though defeated in his principal attack, was still powerful as a minor antagonist; and seeing the impossibility of success against the main body,

redoubled his efforts against those which were detached; accordingly he charged with impetuosity the troops most exposed, amongst whom were those I have been describing: the bugle sounded to close, but whether to the centre, right, or left, I know not; certain it is, however, that the men attempted to close to the right, when to the centre would have been more desirable, and before they could complete their movement, the French cavalry were *mixed with them.*

Our division was posted on the high ground just above this plain; a small rugged ravine separated us from our comrades; but although the distance between us was short, we were, in effect, as far from them as if we were placed upon the rock of Lisbon: we felt much for their situation, but could not afford them the least assistance, and we saw them rode down and cut to pieces, without being able to rescue them, or even discharge one musket in their defence.

Our heavy horse and the 16th Light Dragoons executed some brilliant charges, in each of which they overthrew the French cavalry. An officer of our staff, who led on one of those attacks, unhorsed, and made prisoner Colonel La Motte, of the 16th French Chasseurs; but Don Julian Sanchez, the Guerilla chief, impelled more by valour than prudence, attaked with his Guerillas a first-rate French regiment; the consequence was the total overthrow of the Spanish hero; and as I believe this was the first attempt this species of troops ever made at a regular charge against a French regiment, so I hope, for their own sakes, it was their last.

All the avenues leading to the town of Fuentes d'Onore were in a moment filled with French troops; it was occupied by our 71st and 79th Highlanders, the 83rd, the light companies of the first and third divisions, and some German and Portuguese bat-

talions, supported by the 24th, 45th, 74th, and 88th British regiments, and the 9th and 21st Portuguese.

The ninth corps, which formed the centre of the French army, advanced with the characteristic impetuosity of their nation, and forcing down the barriers, which we had hastily constructed as a temporary defence, came rushing on, and torrent-like, threatened to overwhelm all that opposed them. Every street, and every angle of a street, were the different theatres for the combatants; inch by inch was gained and lost in turn. Whenever the enemy were forced back, fresh troops, and fresh energy on the part of their officers impelled them on again, and towards mid-day, the town presented a shocking sight; our Highlanders lay dead in heaps, while the other regiments, though less remarkable in dress, were scarcely so in the numbers of their slain; the French grenadiers, with their immense caps and gaudy plumes, in piles of twenty and thirty together —some dead, others wounded, with barely strength sufficient to move; their exhausted state, and the weight of their cumbrous appointments, making it impossible for them to crawl out of the range of the dreadful fire of grape and round shot which the enemy poured into the town: great numbers perished in this way, and many were pressed to death in the streets.

It was now half-past twelve o'clock, and although the French troops which formed this attack had been several times reinforced, ours never had; nevertheless the town was still in dispute. Massena, aware of its importance, and mortified at the pertinacity with which it was defended, ordered a fresh column of the ninth corps to reinforce those already engaged. Such a series of attacks, constantly supported by fresh troops, required exertions more than human to withstand; every effort was made to sustain the post, but efforts,

no matter how great, must have their limits. Our soldiers had been engaged in this unequal contest for upwards of eight hours, the heat was moreover excessive, and their ammunition was nearly expended. The Highlanders were driven to the church-yard at the top of the village, and were fighting with the French Grenadiers across the tomb-stones and graves; while the ninth French Light Infantry had penetrated as far as the chapel, distant but a few yards from our line, and were preparing to *debouche* upon our centre. Wallace with his regiment, the 88th, was in reserve on the high ground which overlooked the church-yard, and he was attentively looking on at the combat which raged below, when Sir Edward Pakenham galloped up to him, and said, "Do you see that, Wallace?" "I do," replied the Colonel, "and I would rather drive the French out of the town than cover a retreat across the Coa." "Perhaps," said Sir Edward, "his lordship don't think it tenable." Wallace answering said, "I shall take it with my regiment, and keep it too." "Will you?" was the reply, "I'll go and tell Lord Wellington so; see, here he comes." In a moment or two Pakenham returned at a gallop, and, waving his hat, called out, "He says you may go—come along, Wallace."

At this moment General Mackinnon came up, and placing himself beside Wallace and Pakenham, led the attack of the 88th Regiment, which soon changed the state of affairs. This battalion advanced with fixed bayonets in column of sections, *left in* front, in double quick time, their firelocks at the trail. As it passed down the road leading to the chapel, it was warmly cheered by the troops that lay at each side of the wall, but the soldiers made no reply to this greeting —they were placed in a situation of great distinction, and they felt it; they were going to fight, not only under the eye of their own army and general, but also

in the view of every soldier in the French army; but although their feelings were wrought up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, not one hurrah responded to the shouts that welcomed their advance,—there was no noise or talking in the ranks, the men stepped together at a smart trot, as if on a parade, headed by their brave colonel.

It so happened that the command of the company which led this attack devolved upon me. When we came within sight of the French ninth regiment, which were drawn up at the corner of the chapel, waiting for us, I turned round to look at the men of my company, they gave me a cheer that a lapse of many years has not made me forget, and I thought that that moment was the proudest of my life. The soldiers did not look as men usually do going into close fight—pale; the trot down the road had heightened their complexions, and they were the picture of every thing that a chosen body of troops ought to be.

The enemy were not idle spectators of this movement; they witnessed its commencement, and the regularity with which the advance was conducted made them fearful of the result. A battery of eight-pounders advanced at a gallop to an olive-grove on the opposite bank of the river, hoping by the effects of its fire to annihilate the 88th Regiment, or, at all events, embarrass its movements as much as possible; but this battalion continued to press on, joined by its exhausted comrades, and the battery did little execution.

On reaching the head of the village, the 88th Regiment was vigorously opposed by the ninth regiment, supported by some hundred of the Imperial Guard, but it soon closed in with them, and, aided by the brave fellows that had so gallantly fought in the town all the morning, drove the enemy through the different streets at the point of the bayonet, and at length

forced them into the river that separated the two armies. Several of our men fell on the French side of the water. About one hundred and fifty of the grenadiers of the Veteran Guard, in their flight, ran down a street that had been barricaded by us the day before, and which was one of the few that escaped the fury of the morning's assault; but their disappointment was great, upon arriving at the bottom, to find themselves shut in;—mistakes of this kind will sometimes occur, and when they do, the result is easily imagined, —troops advancing to assault a town, uncertain of success, or flushed with victory, have no great time to deliberate as to what they will do; the thing is generally done in half the time the deliberation would occupy. In the present instance, every man was put to death; but our soldiers, as soon as they had leisure, paid the enemy that respect which is due to brave men. This part of the attack was led by Lieutenant George Johnston, of the 88th Regiment.

CHAPTER IX.

State of the town of Fuentes d'Onore after the battle—The wounded—News of General Graham's victory over Marshal Victor—General Brennier's escape from Almeida—Booty—The field of battle.

As soon as the town of Fuentes d'Onore was completely cleared of the enemy, we sheltered ourselves in the best manner we could behind the walls, and at the angles of the different streets; but this was a task not easy to be accomplished, the French batteries continued to fire with such effect: nevertheless, Sir Edward Pakenham remained on horseback, riding through the streets with that daring bravery for which he was remarkable. If he stood still for a moment, the ground about him was ploughed up with round shot.

About this time, Colonel Cameron, of the 79th Highlanders, fell, as did also Captain Irwin, of the 88th Regiment; the death of the latter officer was singular. He had been many years in the army, but this was his first appearance in action. He was short-sighted, and the firing having in some degree slackened, he was anxious to take a view of the scene that was passing: he put his head above the wall behind which his men were stationed, but had scarcely placed

his glass to his eye, when a bullet struck him in the forehead—he sprang from the earth and fell dead.

General Mackinnon and a group of mounted officers were behind the chapel wall, which was the highest point in the village, and consequently much exposed to the enemy's view. This ill-built wall was but a feeble defence against round shot, and it was knocked down in several places, and some wide gaps were made in it. The general stood at one of these breaches giving his directions; he attracted the enemy's notice, and they redoubled their fire on this point. Salvos of artillery astounded our ears, at each of which some part of the old wall was knocked about us; at one of these discharges, five or six feet of it was beaten down, and several men were crushed. Colonel Wallace, of the 88th, was covered with the rubbish, his hat was knocked off, and we thought he was killed, but fortunately he escaped unhurt.

By two o'clock the town was comparatively tranquil. The cannonading on the right of the line had ceased, but the enemy continued to fire on the town; this proceeding was attended with little loss to us, and was fatal to many of their wounded, who lay in a helpless state in the different streets, and could not be moved from their situation without great peril to our men—and they were torn to pieces by the shot of their own army. Several of these poor wretches were saved by the humane exertions of our soldiers, but still it was not possible to attend to all; and, consequently, the havoc made was great. Towards evening the firing ceased altogether, and it was a gratifying sight to behold the soldiers of both armies, who but a few hours before were massacreing each other, mutually assisting to remove the wounded to their respective sides of the river. The town too, as was usual in such cases, was not passed unnoticed; it contained little, it is true, yet even that little was better than nothing;

and it was laughable to see the scrupulous observation of *etiquette* practised by our men, when any windfall, such as a chest of bread or bacon, happened to fall to the lot of a group of individuals in their foraging excursions. The following was the method taken to divide the spoil, and as no national distinction was thought of, the French as well as the British shared in whatever was acquired. An old experienced stager or two, took upon themselves the responsibility of making a division of the plunder according to the number that were present at the capture. This done one of the party was placed with his back to the booty; when one of those who had partitioned it called out with an audible voice—"Who is to have this?" at the same time pointing to the parcel about to be transferred, while he, that was appealed to, without hesitation particularized some one of the number, who immediately seized on his portion, put it into his havresack, and proceeded in search of fresh adventures.

We had now leisure to walk through the town, and observe the effects of the morning's affray. The two armies lost about eight thousand men, and as the chief of this loss was sustained by the troops engaged in the town, the streets were much crowded with the dead and wounded. French and British lay in heaps together, and it would be difficult to say which were most numerous; some of the houses were also crowded with dead Frenchmen, who either crawled there after being wounded, in order to escape the incessant fire which cleared the streets, or who, in a vain effort to save their lives, were overpowered by our men in their last place of refuge; and several were thrust halfway up the large Spanish chimneys.

General Mackinnon, who directed the attack of the 88th Regiment, and accompanied it in its advance, ordered it to retire to the position it had previously

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occupied, and as he was unwilling to attract the notice of the enemy too much, he desired that this operation should be performed by companies. My company, or at least the one I commanded, was the first to quit the town. As I approached the spot where Sir Edward Pakenham was on horseback, he said—"Where are you going, sir?" not at the moment recognizing the regiment. I told him that General Mackinnon had desired me to retire, but of course if he wished me to stay I would. "Oh no," said he, "the 88th have done enough for this day; but the regiment that replaces you would do well to bring a keg of ammunition, *each man,* in addition to his sixty rounds, for, while I have life, the town shall not be taken." He was in a violent perspiration and covered with dust, his left hand bound round with his pocket handkerchief as if he had been wounded—he was ever in the hottest of the fire, and if the whole fate of the battle depended upon his own personal exertions, he could not have fought with more devotion.

Lord Wellington caused the village of Fuentes d' Onore to be occupied by five thousand fresh troops. The light division was selected for this service, and it passed us about five o'clock on the evening of the 5th. General Crawford took the command of this post, and every precaution was resorted to, to strengthen the town; temporary walls were thrown up at the bottom of the streets, carts and doors were put into requisition to barricade every pass, but, as it turned out, those observances were unnecessary; for Marshal Massena, giving up all idea of success, declined any further contest. Thus was the object of his movement frustrated—a battle lost, and Almeida left to its fate.

Our wounded were removed to Villa Formosa, and Lord Wellington decided upon diminishing his front. By this movement we lost our communication with

Sabugal, but we effectually covered Almeida, and still possessed the pass of Castello Bom. At half-past nine o'clock at night, the regiments which had so bravely defended Fuentes d'Onore passed us as we were about to lie down to rest; they were much fatigued, and we were struck with their diminished appearance; the 79th Highlanders, in particular, attracted our notice. We asked them what their loss had been; they said, thirteen officers, including their colonel, Cameron, and more than three hundred rank and file: and the soldiers were nearly correct in their estimate.

The next day, the 6th, we had no fighting; each army kept its position, and Villa Formosa continued to be the receptacle for the wounded. This village is beautifully situated on a craggy hill, at the foot of which runs the little stream of Onore. Its healthful and tranquil situation, added to its proximity to the scene of action, rendered it a most desirable place for our wounded; the perfume of several groves of fruit-trees was a delightful contrast to the smell that was accumulating on the plain below; and the change of scene, added to a strong desire to see a brother officer, who had been wounded in the action of the 5th, led me thither.

On reaching the village, I had little difficulty in finding out the hospitals, as every house might be considered one, but it was some time before I discovered *that* which I wished for; at last I found it. It consisted of four rooms; in it were pent up twelve officers, all badly wounded. The largest room was twelve feet by eight; and this apartment had for its occupants four officers. Next the door, on a bundle of straw, lay two of the 79th Highlanders, one of them shot through the spine. He told me he had been wounded in the streets of Fuentes on the 5th, and

that although he had felt a good deal of pain before, he was now perfectly easy, and free from suffering. I was but ill skilled in surgery, but, nevertheless, I disliked the account he gave of himself. I passed on to my friend; he was sitting on a table, his back resting against a wall. A musket-ball had penetrated his right breast, and passing through his lungs came out at his back, and he owed his life to the great skill and attention of Doctors Stewart and Bell, of the third division. The quantity of blood taken from him was astonishing; three, and sometimes four times a day, they would bleed him, and his recovery was one of those extraordinary instances seldom witnessed. In an inner room was a young officer shot through the head—his was a hopeless case. He was quite delirious, and obliged to be held down by two men—his strength was astonishing, and more than once, while I remained, he succeeded in escaping from the grasp of his attendants. The Scotch officer's servant soon after came in, and stooping down, inquired of his master how he felt, but received no reply; he had half turned on his face; the man took hold of his master's hand, it was still warm, but the pulse had ceased—he was dead. The suddenness of this young man's death sensibly affected his companions; and I took leave of my friend and companion, Owgan, fully impressed with the idea that I should never see him again.

I was on my return to the army, when my attention was arrested by an extraordinary degree of bustle, and a kind of half-stifled moaning, in the yard of a *quinta*, or nobleman's house. I looked through the grating, and saw about two hundred wounded soldiers waiting to have their limbs amputated, while others were arriving every moment. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the frightful appearance of these men; they

had been wounded on the 5th, and this was the 7th; their limbs were swollen to an enormous size. Some were sitting upright against a wall, under the shade of a number of chestnut-trees, and many of these were wounded in the head as well as limbs; the ghastly countenances of these poor fellows presented a dismal sight. The streams of gore, which had trickled down their cheeks, were quite hardened with the sun, and gave their faces a glazed and copper-coloured hue,—their eyes were sunk and fixed, and what between the effects of the sun, of exhaustion, and despair, they resembled more a group of bronze figures than any thing human,—there they sat, silent and statue-like, waiting for their turn to be carried to the amputating-tables. At the other side of the yard lay several whose state was too helpless for them to sit up; a feeble cry from them occasionally, to those who were passing, for a drink of water, was all they uttered.

A little farther on, in an inner court, were the surgeons. They were stripped to their shirts and bloody;—curiosity led me forward; a number of doors, placed on barrels, served as temporary tables, and on these lay the different subjects upon whom the surgeons were operating; to the right and left were arms and legs, flung here and there, without distinction, and the ground was dyed with blood.

Doctor Bell was going to take off the thigh of a soldier of the 50th, and he requested I would hold down the man for him; he was one of the best-hearted men I ever met with, but, such is the force of habit, he seemed insensible to the scene that was passing around him, and with much composure was eating almonds out of his waistcoat-pockets, which he offered to share with me, but, if I got the universe for it, I could not have swallowed a morsel of any thing. The operation upon the man of the 50th was the most

shocking sight I ever witnessed; it lasted nearly half an hour, but his life was saved.

Turning out of this place towards the street, I passed hastily on. Near the gate an assistant-surgeon was taking off the leg of an old German serjeant of the 60th. The doctor was evidently a young practitioner, and Bell, our staff-surgeon, took much trouble in instructing him. It is a tolerably general received opinion, that when the saw passes through the marrow, the patient suffers most pain, but such is not the case. The first cut, and taking up the arteries is the worst. While the old German was undergoing the operation, he seemed insensible of pain when the saw was at work; now and then he would exclaim in broken English, as if wearied—"Oh! mine Got, is she off still?" but he, as well as all those I noticed, felt much when the knife was first introduced, and all thought that red-hot iron was applied to them when the arteries were taken up. The young doctor seemed much pleased when he had the serjeant fairly out of his hands, and it would be difficult to decide whether he or his patient was most happy; but, from everything I could observe, I was of opinion that the doctor made his *début* on the old German's stump. I offered up a few words—prayers they could not be called—that, if ever it fell to my lot to lose any of my members, the young fellow who essayed on the serjeant should not be the person to operate on me.

Outside of this place was an immense pit to receive the dead from the general hospital, which was close by. Twelve or fifteen bodies were flung in at a time, and covered with a layer of earth, and so on, in succession, until the pit was filled. Flocks of vultures already began to hover over this spot, and Villa Formosa was now beginning to be as disagreeable as it was the contrary a few days before. This was my first and last

visit to an amputating-hospital, and I advise young gentlemen, such as I was then, to avoid going near a place of the kind, unless obliged to do so—mine was an accidental visit.

When I reached my regiment I found everything as I left it, except that each hour made our position more disagreeable, from the increasing putridity of the dead men and horses with which the plain was covered. Three days of extreme heat make a serious alteration in a field of battle; the bodies which but a short time before possessed life, and were animated by the finest feelings, were now stretched naked and unnoticed, except by the birds of prey; not, indeed, a lump of cold inanimate clay, but a moving mass of corruption. Some of the bodies were swelled to an enormous size, and upon these the vultures had already commenced their attacks, fancying, perhaps, like other two-footed animals, that the largest was best.

Those birds of ill omen flocked about us in quantities, but although I have frequently attempted to get a shot at them, I never was able to do so. We used first to observe them at an immense height; by degrees they lowered themselves, soaring round as they approached their prey; and when it was ascertained by their advanced scouts that all was safe, they pounced down and stalked on to the different carcases they intended to devour. At a distance, when they were seated, they resembled a number of grey-headed men.

Massena, renouncing all hope of gaining any advantage by a fresh attack upon our position, recrossed the river Agueda with his army, and left the Governor of Almeida to shift for himself. On the 8th and 9th we heard several explosions in that direction, but although we guessed that the governor was destroying some of the magazines previous to his surrender, it never for a moment occurred to us that he meditated what he

afterwards executed with too much success. On the morning of the 11th we heard, with the greatest astonishment, that the garrison, after having successfully passed through our lines that encompassed the place, had escaped, with trifling loss, by the pass of San-Felizes, and succeeded in reaching the French lines on the Agueda. This was certainly the most extraordinary event that took place during the campaign, and the regiments that formed the blockade afforded amusement for several days to our men; the soldiers used to say that the regiment nearest the town *was asleep*, and that the others were *watching them.*

It appeared that on the 7th, Massena sent orders to General Brennier to blow up the fortifications of Almeida; after having done which, he directed him to put himself at the head of his troops, and open a passage for himself through our lines, which having effected, he was to march on Barba-del-Puerco in the first instance, and afterwards make a rapid movement upon the bridge of San-Felizes, where he would find a corps ready to act with him if necessary. General Brennier obeyed these directions with much exactness: he loaded the mines with powder; spiked the cannon, and otherwise injured them by firing balls from one gun into another: he rendered the ammunition and provisions useless, and on the 10th he disclosed his intentions to the officers most in his confidence. He made no secret of the dangers attendant on the enterprise they were about to embark in; and having informed them of the measures he had taken to insure its success, asked if they were willing to stand by him —he added that the watchword was to be *Buonaparte Bayard.* The mention of this in itself would have sufficed to rally all around him, had there been any backwardness on the part of the officers; but all seemed devoted to the general and the enterprise. He then

conducted them to the ramparts, from whence he pointed out the direction he meant to follow in his march. He observed that the stars should serve as their compass, and having hastily collected the garrison, he left the place at eleven o'clock at night. Several of the mines in the ramparts exploded about the time the advance of the column reached the British outposts, but they not expecting such an attack, and being greatly outnumbered, were unable to offer any effectual resistance, and a passage was in consequence made for the leading battalion which opened the march. The rear of this little band suffered some loss, but Brennier succeeded in his enterprise, and was lauded to the skies for his chivalrous exploit.

The command of the army of Portugal was now transferred to Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa. Massena returned to France in ill-health and ill-humour, in consequence of the bad success of his combinations, since his elevation to the command of this army, which, it was confidently stated, was to drive the English from the Peninsula. With the qualifications of our new antagonist we were unacquainted, except that having been for a considerable time aide-de-camp to the Emperor Napoleon, we looked upon him as something out of the common way—a kind of "*rara avis;*" however, we found him out before we parted with him.

For six days we had not seen our baggage, and were in consequence without a change of linen; we lay among dirty straw for those six days.

I had no nightcap, and my socks scarcely deserved the name. But this was not all; those who had beards—at this epoch I had not—suffered them to grow to a hideous length, and their faces were so altered as to be scarcely recognizable even by themselves. They might be compared to old Madame

Rendau, who not having consulted her glass since her husband's death, on seeing her own face in the mirror of another lady, exclaimed, "Who is this!" We all agreed that it would be delightful to bathe ourselves in the river, and half a dozen of us walked to the banks of the Dúos Casas. Having washed ourselves, we had a hankering for clean linen; and as none of us could be brought to the opinion of the Irishman, who said it was a charming thing when he *turned* his shirt, we proceeded to *wash* ours, and as this was the first appearance of any of us in the character of a *blanchisseur*, we all acquitted ourselves badly, but I worst of all. In an unguarded moment, I flung my unfortunate shirt a little farther than the other's did, and, not being quite as light as the day it came out of the fold, it sunk to the bottom, and I never saw it afterwards. I soon discovered the cause of my mishap; a small whirlpool (which at the moment, appeared in my eyes little inferior to Charybdis,) carried it into its vortex, and left me shivering and shaking like a solitary heron watching for a fish by the bank of a river. This accident, however, happened at rather a lucky time; our men had ransacked the French knapsacks with tolerable effect, and as soon as my mishap was known to the men of the company, I was not long wanting the means to supply my loss; at another time this might not have been a matter of easy accomplishment, because it is well known in the army, that the men in my regiment were never remarkable for carrying *too great a kit.*

The soldiers, as was their custom, made a display of the different articles they had picked up: some had watches, others rings, and almost all money. There cannot be a stronger contrast between the soldiers of any two nations, than between those of France and England: the former, cautious, tem-

perate, and frugal, ever with something valuable about him; the latter the most unthinking, least cautious, and intemperate animal in existence, with seldom a farthing in his pocket, although his pay is three times greater than the others. A French soldier was quite a prize to one of our fellows, and the produce of the plunder gained, served him for drink for a week, and sometimes for a fortnight!

I knew a soldier once make a capture of *thirteen hundred dollars*, which having squandered, this same man, in less than a year afterwards, was tried for his life, for a highway robbery, and he would have been hanged, had not a Portuguese woman proved an *alibi* in his favour; the booty taken by him (for I am convinced the woman swore falsely to save his life) amounted to six vintens, or about *eight-pence* sterling! Under similar circumstances, a French soldier would have hoarded up his treasure, and, on his return home, dressed like a gentleman, and gone to all the dancing-houses in his neighbourhood.

On the 12th, we left the position we had occupied for eight days, and returned to our old quarters at Nave d'Aver. As we passed over the ground between that village and Posobello, we traversed a part of the field of battle which we had not before viewed, except at a distance too great to distinguish distinctly the objects with which it was covered; this was the ground upon which the 7th division, and the troops that were forced from Posobello, had fought. It was strewed with horses and soldiers.

In general, the bodies of both were, in part, devoured by the eagles and vultures; but there was *one* figure amongst them that remained untouched, as if it was too horrible even for *them* to approach. This man, who in his lifetime must have been of enormous size, presented the human figure under a frightful aspect;

he was swollen to the size of a horse, and I cannot account for this extraordinary enlargement of his frame—which was not partial, but general. This giant arrested our attention for several minutes, and we stopped to survey him distinctly; the flesh was quite green, except the face, which was black—he had been shot through the head perhaps. It would be difficult to convey a description of the frightful spectacle this man offered to our view, and the recollection of him haunted me for a week afterwards.

CHAPTER X.

Guerilla warfare; its true character—General Beresford detached to the Alemtejo with the second division—The 13th Light Dragoons charge the cavalry of General Latour Maubourg—Olivenza surrenders—Frenchmen and Irishmen on a march—English regiments—Colonel Wallace—Severe drilling—Adjutants raised from the ranks—Arrival of the division at Niza—Taking a rise.

We occupied our old quarters at Nave d'Aver, and were well received by the inhabitants, who preferred taking a quiet view of the combats of the 3rd and 5th to taking a part in both or either; their plan of operations was of a far different sort, and although unattended with any danger to themselves, was fraught with the most disastrous consequences to their foes, which is, no matter what may be urged against it, the very essence of the art of war.

It may, perhaps, be asked what their method was? or why I, a mere subaltern, should take upon myself the censorship of the art of war? My answer to the former shall be plain and I hope conclusive. To the latter, that having served during part of the year 1809, the entire of 1810-11-12, and part of 1813, in the third division (commonly designated the fighting division) of the Peninsular army, and the division never having, during the period alluded to, squibbed

off as much as one cartridge without my being in every place,—I had opportunities of gaining, and I think I did gain, a little insight into military tactics. If, however, the view I have taken of the subject upon which I am speaking, be an erroneous one, I fear my readers will come to the conclusion that I have lost some time which might have been better employed—or to speak more plainly, that I have mistaken my profession. Marshal Saxe used to say, that a mule which had made twenty campaigns under Cæsar would still be but a mule.

I have digressed thus far before touching on a subject, that, no doubt (although I have not seen any work of the kind) has been written upon, and upon which much diversity of opinion did exist at one time in England; whether it still exists or not I shall not pretend to say, not having been in the United Kingdom for some years, but certain it is that a very general opinion was prevalent that the war in the Peninsula was carried on, on the part of the peasantry, in a spirit bordering more on a crusade, than the ordinary exertions of a brave people struggling for liberty, and that those heroes fought more like a parcel of devils incarnate than mortal men. Indeed, the engravings struck off at Lisbon in commemoration of those days, certainly represented them as a gigantic, ferocious people, while the few British that were thrown into the back-ground, looked like so many dwarfs who were afraid to come to close quarters with the French. I have ever combatted this mistaken opinion, nor does the recollection of the hundreds of those heroes that I have seen marched to the different depôts, handcuffed like a gang of criminals, weaken the view I have taken of the *voluntary* part the Peninsular people took in the contest. In a word, their plan was this:

The moment our troops had completely routed a

body of the enemy's infantry, strewing the ground with dead and wounded, disorganized a park of artillery, or unhorsed some squadrons of dragoons, *then*, and *then* only, would these *gallant fellows* sally forth from their lurking places, and first taking the precaution to put a stop to any sort of parley from their unfortunate victims by knocking them on the head, completely rifle them of every thing they possessed. On the contrary, if our troops met with any reverse, as in the case of Don Julian Sanchez and his ragged band, our allies would take advantage of every incident of ground, and make one of those rapid retrograde movements, sufficient to baffle the evolutions of the most redoubtable *legère* regiments in the French army. This I say is the true harassing system, and the one suited to the genius of the Peninsular nations. It weakens your enemy, and is attended with no risk to yourselves or your friends, which is the same thing: for in England many think that the Portuguese and Spaniards did as much, if not more, during the Peninsular contest, than the British army.

I remember once, upon my return home in the year 1813, getting myself closely cross-examined by an old lawyer, because I said I thought the Portuguese troops inferior to the French, still more to the British. "Inferior to the British, sir, I have read Lord Wellington's last dispatch, and he says the Portuguese fought as well as the British, and I suppose you won't contradict him?" I saw it was vain to convince this pugnacious old man of the necessity for saying these complimentary things, and we parted mutually dissatisfied with each other, he taking me, no doubt, for a forward young puppy, and I looking upon him as a monstrous old bore.

After the affair of Pombal, General Beresford was detached with the second division to the province of Alemtejo. He passed the Tagus at Villa Velha, and

reached Portalegre on the 20th of March. On the 24th he advanced to Campo Mayor; this town was occupied by three thousand French troops, under the command of General Latour Maubourg. On perceiving the advanced guard of General Beresford's army, he quitted the town and established his troops on the heights in his rear. The 13th Regiment of Light Dragoons gallantly charged the cavalry of Latour Maubourg and overthrew them at the first onset, but the French infantry which were posted behind their cavalry, formed into square, and not only protected their own horse, but drove back ours with considerable loss. The bravery of the infantry saved their cavalry from total defeat and disgrace, and gave them time to re-form and advance again to the combat.

The infantry, with that promptitude which characterizes French troops, took advantage of this change in their favour, and continued their march upon Badajoz. repeatedly performing this fine manœuvre, and at last succeeded in reaching the Guadiana unbroken, and unquestionably with the honours of the day on their side. They neither lost cannon nor baggage, and not more than twenty prisoners fell into our hands. The conduct of the 13th Light Dragoons in this affair was particularly dashing.

General Beresford quartered his army in the neighbourhood of Elvas, and made preparations to act on the left bank of the Guadiana. On the 4th of April he passed that river with little opposition. He reconnoitered Olivenza, and was informed by his spies that the garrison consisted of only five hundred infantry. This was, doubtless, an oversight on the part of the Duke of Dalmatia, because a town of such extent required a force of at least three thousand men.

No time was lost in investing it; the first parallel was completed on the 12th of April; on the 15th the

batteries opened, and on the same day Olivenza surrendered, but the power of the enemy was still unshaken; the surprise of a single garrison, though a distinguished evidence of what might be done by our troops, was trivial in the scale of a war to be conducted against the whole power of France.

Matters remained thus in this quarter, and Lord Wellington, after the battle of Fuentes d'Onore, and the retreat of the army of Portugal across the Agueda, employed himself in giving directions for the repairs of the injury inflicted by Brennier upon Almeida previous to his evacuation of that fortress. The troops had recovered from their fatigues and were fresh again, and ready for any thing, when accounts reached us from the Alemtejo that General Beresford was carrying on the siege of Badajoz, in which operation he was likely to be disturbed by Marshal Soult, who was on his march from Seville. Our division broke up from its cantonments on the 16th of May, and Lord Wellington, who rode at a rapid pace, reached Elvas in three days. There he received the report of the battle of Albuera.

The weather was fine, and we continued our route without any forced marches, taking the old beaten track through Castello Branco, Niza, and Portalegre. Our march was uninterrupted by any particular incident; we had no enemy near us, and were therefore left to ourselves.

The French army have the character of being the best marchers in Europe, and I know from experience that no men, to use a phrase of the "Fancy," understand better than they do, how to "hit and get away;" nevertheless, I would say, that an army composed exclusively of Irishmen would outmarch any French army, as much as I know they would outfight them. The quality which carries a Frenchman through, and enables him to overcome obstacles truly formidable in

themselves, is his gaiety, and his facility of accommodating not only his demeanour but his *stomach* also, to circumstances as they require it. An Irishman is to the full as gay as a Frenchman; if he does not possess his *piquant* wit,—and I don't say that he does not,—he has in a paramount degree the rich humour of his own country, which is no where else to be found. He can live on as little nourishment as a Frenchman; give him his pipe of tobacco, and he will march for two days without food and without *grumbling*—give him, in addition, a little spirits and a biscuit, and he will work for a week. This will not be a task so easy of accomplishment to the English soldier; early habits have given him a relish for good eating, and plenty of it too: if he has not a regular allowance of solid food, it is certain he will not do his work well for any great length of time. But an Irish fellow has been accustomed all his life to be what an Englishman would consider half-starved; therefore quantity or quality is no great consideration with him; his stomach is like a corner cupboard—*you might throw any thing into it.* Neither do you find elsewhere the lively thought, the cheerful song, or pleasant story to be met *only* in an Irish regiment. We had a few Englishmen in my corps, and I do not remember ever to have heard one of them attempt a joke. But there are those who think an Irish regiment more difficult to manage than that of any other nation. Never was there a more erroneous idea. The English soldier is to the full as drunken as the Irish, and not half so pleasant in his liquor.

These opinions are, however, mere matter of fancy. Some of our best regiments were English, and one, to please me, decidedly the finest in the Peninsular army, the 43rd, was principally composed of Englishmen. Then there was that first-rate battle regiment, the 45th, a parcel of Nottingham weavers, whose sedentary habits would lead you to suppose they could not be

prime marchers, but the contrary was the fact, and they marched to the full as well as my own corps, which were all Irish save three or four. But if it come to a hard tug, and that we had neither rations nor shoes, then, indeed, the Connaught Rangers would be in their element, and outmarch almost any battalion in the service; and for this plain reason, that scarcely one of them wore many pairs of shoes prior to the date of his enlistment, and as to the rations, (the most part of them at all events) a dozen times had been in all probability the *outside* of their acquaintance with such a delicacy.

But the grand secret, in a good marching, good fighting, or loyal regiment, one not given to a habit of deserting, is being *well commanded*; because the finest body of men may be ruined, the efforts of the bravest regiment paralyzed, and the best disposed corps become marauders and deserters, from having an inefficient man at their head.

At a period later than the one I am touching upon, my regiment was placed in a situation where the greatest facilities were afforded, and the strongest temptation made use of, to induce the men to desert. Several regiments lost from one to three hundred men each! but notwithstanding that we were stationed on the bank of a river, within a few hours' sail of the American territory—notwithstanding that the river was crowded with their trading vessels, and that more than one third of the battalion were allowed daily to work on board those ships, which were hourly arriving and departing, —and notwithstanding that we had no possible means of preventing the desertion of the entire regiment in a night if they chose it—*we never lost one man.*

This is a fact that I take the greatest pride in recording of my old comrades, and a point that in my opinion is worthy the attention of officers at the head of regiments. It may not be amiss to add that the men,

generally speaking, were in debt in consequence of the arrival of a detachment from Ireland; the company I paid owed about fifty pounds, and the other companies averaged the same amount. Everything depends on a good commanding officer; I do not mean one too fond of *quackery*—quite the contrary. Too much training is as bad as too little; we had no fuss with our men—no chocolate breakfast, and we had but few, as compared with others, on the sick list. We generally turned out half as strong again as other regiments; but ours was no rule to go by, because the soldiers were too hardy to be overcome by any ordinary fatigue, and too good-humoured, if they were, to let the officers know it. Poor Joe Kelly used to call us *the united Irishmen*.

Colonel Alexander Wallace, who commanded us for so many years, and under whom the regiment repeatedly covered itself with glory, was the very man we wanted. Although a Scotsman himself, he was intimately acquainted with the sort of men he had under him, and he dealt with them, and addressed their feelings, in a way that was peculiar to himself, and suited to them. In action he was the same as on parade, and in either case he was as he should be. If we were placed (as we often were) in any critical situation, he would explain to the soldiers what he expected them to do; if in danger of being charged by cavalry, he would say, "Mind the square; you know I often told you that if ever you had to form it from line, in face of an enemy, you'd be in a d——d ugly way, and have plenty of noise about you; mind the tellings off, and don't give the *false touch* to your right or left hand man; for by G—d, if you are once broken, you'll be running here and there like a parcel of *frightened pullets!*" But Colonel Wallace was out of his place as a mere commander of a regiment; he was eminently calculated to head a division, because he not only possessed that intrepidity of mind which would brave any

danger, but genius to discover the means of overcoming it. It was by his foresight that our brave companions, the 45th, were sustained in their unequal contest with Reignier's division at Busaco; and Lord Wellington, who saw and fully appreciated the manœuvre, rode up to the 88th Regiment, and seizing Colonel Wallace by the hand, said—"Upon my honour, Wallace, I never witnessed a more gallant charge than that just now made by your regiment." The dead and wounded of the 2pd, 4th, 36th, and Irish brigade, (four French regiments which were opposed to the 88th singly,) lay thick on the face of the hill, and their numbers gave ample testimony that we deserved the praises bestowed upon us by our General. The 45th also came in for their share of praise, and no battalion ever merited it better than they did,—at one time they were engaged with nearly ten times their own number.

It was the fashion with some to think that the 88th were a parcel of wild, rattling rascals, ready for a row, but loosely officered. The direct contrary was the fact. Perhaps in the whole British army there was not one regiment so severely drilled. If a man coughed in the ranks, he was punished; if the sling of the firelock, for an instant, left the hollow of the shoulder when it should not, he was punished; and if he moved his knapsack when standing at ease, he was punished, more or less, of course, according to the offence. The consequence of this system, exclusively Colonel Wallace's, was that the men never had the appearance of being fatigued upon a march, and when they halted, you did not see them thrusting their firelocks against their packs to support them. Poor Bob Hardyman, of the 45th, said, the reason the Connaught Rangers carried their packs better than any other regiment was, "that they never had any thing in them!" and, to speak candidly, we never had more than was necessary, and in truth it was very little that satisfied our fellows.

A writer of celebrity so strongly bears me out in what I have been saying, that I shall take leave to quote a few lines of *his* opinion of my old corps.

"Our division continued to march in pursuit of the enemy till near dark, when we took up our quarters in some villages and farm-houses. In one of these latter, where I was proceeding to quarter some of my company, I found a party of the light company of the 88th, or Connaught Rangers, who, after the pursuit of the enemy, had brought up there for the night. They were all tolerably fresh, as may be supposed, and were seated round the fire cutting their jokes, as they contemplated with greedy looks the culinary process which was taking place in a large cauldron depending from the roof of a kitchen chimney. The first salutation I received on entering was, 'Plase your honour, you will be after taking some of our supper; we have got a couple of geese boiled in wine!' This invitation, however my curiosity might have disposed me to taste of so novel a dish, I could not accept; but I left a party of my soldiers to assist them in discussing the banquet, which I have no doubt was highly palatable. This 88th, although from their name one would suppose them to be a rollicking set, was a very good regiment, and in excellent order. They had always a soldier-like look, and they carried their packs well, which, trifling as the circumstance may appear, is a sure sign of a good service regiment." *

At drill our manœuvres were chiefly confined to line marching, echellon movements, and formation of the square in every possible way; and in all these we excelled. Colonel Wallace was very unlike an old Major, who having once got his battalion *into* square, totally forgot how to get it *out* of it. Having tried several ways, each time more effectually clubbing the sections, he thus addressed his officers and soldiers:—

* Twelve years' Military Adventure, vol. ii. p. 330.

"Gentlemen! I can clearly discern that there is a *something wanting*, and I strongly recommend you, when you reach your barracks, to peruse Dundas!—Men, you may go home," and he thus dismissed them.

I never remember our having as much as one adjutant's drill; all was done by the commanding officer himself. Our adjutant was left ill at Lisbon, and he that acted was more of a good penman (an essential point) than a drill. I forget now how the circumstance of our having been sent an adjutant from the Guards occurred; but one of their serjeant-majors did reach us in the capacity of adjutant: on his arrival at head-quarters he dined with the Colonel, who invited him to attend parade the next morning. We were under arms at ten, and never once ordered arms until two! Not a man fell out of the ranks, not a man coughed, and not a man moved his pack. When the drill was over, "Well," said Colonel Wallace, "what do you think of the state of the battalion?" "Very steady indeed, sir," replied the Guardsman. He left us that night, *and we never saw him afterwards.* No one knew where he went, but it was conjectured that he was unused to the mode of discipline he had just witnessed, and that he was unwilling to embark in an undertaking that most unquestionably would be no sinecure. I was not sorry for this, because I always had, and have, an aversion to adjutants raised from the ranks. An adjutant is, properly speaking, the mouth-piece of his commanding officer, and should be a gentleman capable of writing a good official letter; and surely this cannot be expected or looked for in a man raised from the station of a private soldier.

I knew two persons of this description: one commenced an official letter, and concluded with stating that his wife and children were *quite hearty.* The other, one evening in a large company, hearing an argument carried on as to the different merits of

Virgil and Homer, said, "They might be fine fellows for aught he either knew or cared, but that he would lay a bet neither of them ever *smelt powder*," and he would, without doubt, have won his wager.

On the 22nd of May, our division reached Niza. Any person who has ever had the misfortune to remain an hour in that filthy place, must, no doubt, remember the squalid appearance of its inhabitants; perhaps the world does not contain a more wretched race than those beings. The Portuguese nation are at best rather a dirty race, but Niza as compared with other towns, is like a filthy puddle, in comparison to a clear stream. It is one of those antiquated, fortified, and neglected towns, which, like Aronches, Portalegre, and Campo Mayor, was once of some importance. At present, it is remarkable but for two things—the dirt of its inhabitants, and the number of storks that inhabit an old Moorish castle which stands in the centre of the town. Notwithstanding the countless number of these birds, and the voracious attacks which they make upon frogs, toads, serpents, and other reptiles, (I wish they would attack the people!) the ditches were filled with the latter. Several of the soldiers were stung by vipers and centipedes, and although I escaped both, I was frightfully bitten by fleas.

On the 24th of May, we reached Campo Mayor, and here I became acquainted with Maurice Quill. It would be quite idle in me to attempt giving any very detailed account of a character so well known; one who, whenever he opened his mouth, was sure to raise a laugh, and often before he had time to speak; and he by whom I was introduced (Dr. O'Reily) was little, if any thing, inferior to Quill in either eccentricity or humour.

The first question Quill asked O'Reily was, if we all slept soundly the night Brennier got away from

Almeida. O'Reily replied, "that some of our army certainly slept sounder than was desirable; but that in their affair at Albuera, they did seem to have had their eyes perfectly open, not only during the action, but after it;"—at this moment, a couple of hundred of those troops that had been broken by the Polish horse, having escaped from the enemy, passed us.

During our conversation, O'Reily, as was customary with him, became quite abstracted, and apparently absorbed in his own reflections, and upon our turning round, we discovered him in one of Mendoza's attitudes! "What are you squaring at?" demanded Maurice. "My good friend Quill," replied O'Reily, "I have long felt the difficulty of coming to a satisfactory conclusion as to the probability of science being eventually able to overcome savage strength. There is much, sir, to be said on both sides of the question, and I have great doubts concerning the battle about to be decided." "What battle? why sure we are not going to fight another so soon?" said Quill. "The fight to which I allude, sir," said O'Reily; with Quixote-like gravity—for he paused between every word—"is the one pending between Crib and the black man Molineux; it will be a contest of science against brute strength"—and he threw himself into one of the finest defensive attitudes I ever saw; "there," said he, "there is the true science for you; nevertheless, it might be overcome by savage strength, and there is the rub, sir. I have devoted much time in endeavouring to come to a satisfactory conclusion on this point, but hitherto without effect; so I must await the issue of this fearful encounter; and my dear Quill, having said so much on the subject, allow me to wish you a very good morning." It was evident, that although Quill was no novice, O'Reily had taken "a rise out of him," and it afforded us matter of amusement for many a day after.

We remained in Campo Mayor until the 27th of May, (in order to allow the stores and battering train from Elvas to arrive) on which day we passed the Guadiana at a ford, distant from San Christoval about three cannon-shots: we received no interruption in our passage of the river, and the operation was performed without loss. The 28th, 29th, and 30th, were taken up in marking out our camp, and constructing huts; and as the weather was beautiful, and our camp abundantly supplied by the peasantry, we passed a very agreeable time of it.

The river ran within a few yards of us; its marshy banks being thickly covered with plantations of olives, afforded a delightful shade to us when we either went to fish or bathe. Its breadth at this point might be about sixty toises, and it is well stocked with fine mullet. We had several expert fishermen amongst us, and they contrived not only to supply their own tables with fish, but also to increase the comforts of their friends.

CHAPTER XI.

Second siege of Badajoz—A reconnoissance—Death of Captain Patten—Attacks on Fort St. Christoval—Their failure—Causes of their failure—Gallant conduct of Ensign Dyas, 51st Regiment—His promotion by the Duke of York.

BADAJOZ was laid siege to for the second time on the 30th of May 1811; on that day, the investment of the town on the left bank of the Guadiana was completed, as was also that of the fort of San Christoval on the right bank; and the trenches before both were opened that night.

This was my first siege, and the novelty of the thing compensated me in some degree for the sleepless nights I used to pass at its commencement; but habit soon reconciled me, and I could sleep soundly in a battery for a couple of hours at a time. Nothing astonished me so much as the noise made by the engineers; I expected that their loud talking would bring the enemy's attention towards the sound of our pick-axes, and that all the cannon in the town would be turned against us, and in short I thought every moment would be my last. I scarcely ventured to breathe until we had completed a respectable first parallel, and when it was fairly finished, just as morn-

ing began to dawn, I felt inexpressibly relieved. The seventh division was equally fortunate before San Christoval.

As soon as the enemy had a distinct view of what we had been doing, he opened a battery or two against us with, however, but little effect, and I began to think a siege was not that tremendous thing I had been taught to expect; but at this moment a thirty-two pound shot passed through a mound of earth in front of that part of the parallel in which I was standing, (which was but imperfectly finished) and taking two poor fellows of the 83rd (who were carrying a hand-barrow) across their bellies, cut them in two, and whirled their remnants through the air. I had never before so close a view of the execution a round shot was capable of performing, and it was of essential service to me during this and my other sieges. It was full a week afterwards before I held myself as upright as before.

On the 2nd of June, our batteries opened against the Castle and San Christoval; the communication between the latter and Badajoz was covered by a *tête du pont*, that protected the Roman bridge, which terminates at the Elvas gate. Our fire on the left bank commenced with a good deal of brilliancy, but the brass guns were inadequate to the task they had to perform, and after being a short time at work, became so hot as to be useless. The artillery-men were occupied for several hours throwing buckets of water over their barrels, in order the sooner to render them fit for work. The cannon of the enemy were, it is true, of the same description, but their train was more numerous; and besides they could, without much trouble, disarm such of their batteries as were not opposed to ours, and thus, by a continual interchange of guns, overpower our fire, while we were obliged to work with the same set: this they did,

and with considerable effect too, and our casualties increased in proportion.

The touch-holes of several of the cannon melted away, and became so large, that they were unserviceable; others were rendered useless by being plugged up with the enemy's shot; and by ten o'clock each morning, our line of batteries presented a very disorganized appearance; sand-bags, gabions, and fascines, knocked here and there; guns flung off their carriages, and carriages beaten down under their guns. The boarded platforms of the batteries, damp with the blood of our artillery-men, or the headless trunks of our devoted engineers, bore testimony to the murderous fire opposed to us, but nevertheless every thing went on with alacrity and spirit; the damage done to the embrasures was speedily repaired, and many a fine fellow lost his life endeavouring to vie with the men of the engineers in braving dangers, unknown to any but those who have been placed in a similar situation.

It was on a morning such as I am talking of, that Colonel Fletcher, chief officer of engineers, came into the battery where I was employed; he wished to observe some work that had been thrown up by the enemy near the foot of the castle the preceding night. The battery was more than usually full of workmen repairing the effects of the morning's fire, and the efforts of the enemy against this part of our works were excessively animated. A number of men had fallen and were falling, but Colonel Fletcher, apparently disregarding the circumstance, walked out to the right of the battery, and taking his stand upon the level ground, put his glass to his eye, and commenced his observations with much composure. Shot and shell flew thickly about him, and one of the former tore up the ground by his side and covered him with clay; but not in the least regarding this, he

remained, steadily observing the enemy. When at length he had satisfied himself, he quietly put up his glass, and turning to a man of my party who was sitting on the outside of an embrasure, pegging in a fascine, said, "My fine fellow, you are too much exposed; get inside the embrasure, and you will do your work nearly as well." "I'm almost finished, colonel," replied the soldier, "and it isn't worth while to move now; those fellows can't hit me, for they've been trying it these fifteen minutes." They were the last words he ever spoke! He had scarcely uttered the last syllable, when a round shot cut him in two, and knocked half of his body across the breech of the gun. The name of this soldier was Edmund Man; he was an Englishman, although he belonged to the 88th Regiment. When he fell, the French cannoniers, as was usual with them, set up a shout, denoting how well satisfied they were with their practice!

On the right bank of the river, the operations against San Christoval proceeded more rapidly than those against the castle, and the loss was proportionable to that sustained by the troops employed on the left of the Guadiana. Amongst the officers who fell, was Lieutenant Hunt, of the Artillery; he was a young man of much promise, and had distinguished himself by his zeal in the batteries.

One evening while we were occupied in the usual way in the trenches, a number of us stood talking together; several shells fell in the works, and we were on the alert a good deal in order to escape from them. A shell on a fine night at a distance is a pretty sight enough, but I, for one, never liked too near a view of it. We were on this night kept tolerably busy in avoiding those that fell amongst us; one, however, took us by surprise, and before we could escape, fell in the middle of the trench; every one made the best of his way to the nearest *traverse*,

and the confusion was much increased by some of the sappers passing at the moment with a parcel of gabions on their backs. Colonel Trench of the 74th, in getting away ran against one of these men, and not only threw him down, but fell headlong over him, and sticking fast in one of the gabions was unable to move. As soon as the shell exploded, we all sallied forth from our respective nooks, and relieved Colonel Trench from his awkward position. "Well," said Colonel King, of the 5th, "I often saw a *gabion* in a *trench*, but this is the first time I ever saw a *Trench* in a *gabion*." Considering the time and place, the pun was not a bad one, and made us all laugh heartily, in which Colonel Trench good humouredly joined.

Not long after this, a round shot carried away the arm of a soldier of the 94th. Doctor O'Reily, of my corps, happening to be the nearest medical man, was awoke out of a sound sleep by his orderly serjeant, and having examined the stump, amputated the fractured part. O'Reily was one of the most eccentric, and at the same time one of the pleasantest fellows in the world. He delighted in saying extraordinary things in extraordinary places, and it was amusing to those who knew him well, to see his countenance, after saying something out of the common way before a stranger. In the present instance, after having wrapt his boat-cloak about him, and settled himself in the same position he had been in before he performed the operation on the 94th man, he, with the most profound gravity of manner, asked the serjeant if he recollected the state in which he had found him? "Indeed, sir," replied the orderly, with a broad grin, "your honour was fast asleep, *snorin* mighty loud." "Well then, sir, if you return here in five minutes, in all human probability you will find me in precisely the same situation," and he immediately fell asleep, or feigned to do so.

On the evening of the 5th, I was sent in advance with a covering party of forty men; we were placed some distance in front of the works, and as usual received directions to beware of a surprise. Our batteries were all armed, and a sortie from the garrison was not improbable; the night was unusually dark, and except an occasional shell from our mortars, the striking of the clocks in the town, or the challenge of the French sentinels along the battlements of the castle, every thing was still.

A man of a fanciful disposition, or indeed of an ordinary way of thinking, is seldom placed in a situation more likely to cause him to give free scope to his imagination, than when lying before an enemy on a dark night; every sound, the very rustling of a leaf, gives him cause for speculation; figures will appear, or seem to appear in different shapes; sometimes the branch of a tree passes for a tremendous fellow with extended arms, and the waving of a bush is mistaken for a party crouching on their hands and knees.

The certainty that several batteries may be opened upon you at "sight" without "advice" being given of it, or that some hundreds of chosen troops may rush upon you with fixed bayonets, is an unpleasant idea, and the knowledge that those fellows are paid by the governor *according to the way they do their work*, tends but little to tranquillize you, or give you a turn for *sleep*. Expecting both, or either of these things, it is not to be wondered at, that a man should be a little on what the French call the *qui vive*, and I don't know why it was, but I could not divest myself of the idea that an attack upon our lines was meditated. I cast a look at my men as they lay on the ground, and saw that each held his firelock in his grasp, and was as he should be; half an hour passed away in this manner, but no sound gave warning that my suspicions were well founded. The noise of the workmen in the

trenches lessened by degrees, and as the hour of midnight approached, there was, comparatively speaking, a death-like silence. I went forward a short distance, but it was a short distance, for in truth—to say the least of it—I was a little "hipped." I even wished the enemy would throw a shot or two against our works to give a fillip to my thoughts. Heavens! how I envied the soldiers, who slept like so many *tops*, and snored at least as loud as Dennis Brulgruddery, when he *awoke* the congregation of Parson Snufflebags—I went forward again, but had not proceeded more than about one hundred paces when I heard voices whispering in my front, and upon observing more minutely in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded, I saw distinctly two men. The uniform of one was dark; the other wore a large cloak, and I could hear his sabre clinking by his side as he approached me.

At the instant I do not know *what* sum I would have considered too great to have purchased my ransom, and placed me once more at the head of my men. I need scarcely say that I regretted the step I had taken, but it was too late. The figures continued to advance towards the spot where I was crouched, and were already within a few paces of me: I did not know what to do, I dreaded remaining stationary, and I was ashamed to run away—there was not a moment to be lost, and I made up my mind to sell my life dearly. I sprang up with my drawn sabre in my hand, and called out as loud as I was able (and it was but a so-so-effort), "Who goes there?"—My delight was great to find in place of two Frenchmen (the advance, as I expected, of several hundred), Captain Patten, of the Engineers, attended by a serjeant of his corps; he held a dark lantern under his cloak, and told me he had been on his way to reconnoitre the breach in the castle-wall, but that he thought it as well to return to the first covering party he should meet with, in order to get a

file of men which he proposed taking with him to within a short distance of the breach. I was just then in that frame of mind, from my own little adventure, to approve highly of his precaution, and I gave him a couple of what our fellows (the Connaught Rangers) used to call, lads *that wern't easy*, or, to speak without a metaphor, two fellows that would walk into the mouth of a cannon if they were bid to do it.

Previous to this I had passed an uneasy night, but I was now filled with much anxiety for the fate of Captain Patten, and my own two men. They had left me about a quarter of an hour, when a few musket-shots from the bastion nearest the breach, announced that the *reconnoissance* had not been made unnoticed by the enemy; and shortly after, the return of my soldiers confirmed the fact.

It appeared, that upon arriving within pistol-shot of the wall, Captain Patten motioned to the men to lie down, while he crept forward to the breach; he had succeeded in ascertaining its state, and was about to return to the soldiers, when some inequality in the ground caused him to stumble a little, and the noise attracted the notice of the nearest sentinel, whose fire gave the alarm to the others—one of those shots struck Captain Patten in the back, a little below the shoulder, and he survived its effects but a few hours. Thus fell a fine young man, an ornament to that branch of the service to which he belonged, and a branch, which in point of men of highly cultivated scientific information, as well as the most chivalrous bravery, may challenge the world to show its superior.

The fire against the castle was continued on the following day, the 6th, with much effect, and the batteries in front of San Christoval had not only overcome the fire of that outwork, but towards mid-day the breach was judged assailable. At nine o'clock at night, one hundred men of the seventh division, commanded by

Major Macintosh, of the 85th Regiment, advanced to the assault; the forlorn-hope, consisting of six volunteers, and led on by Ensign Joseph Dyas, of the 51st Regiment, who solicited this honour, headed the attack.

The troops advanced with much order, although opposed to a heavy fire. Arrived upon the glacis they speedily descended the ditch, and the forlorn-hope, accompanied by an officer of engineers, pressed on to the breach. They had scarcely arrived at its foot, when the officer of engineers was mortally wounded, and Ensign Dyas was in consequence the only person to direct the men at the breach; for the main body, including the commanding officer, attempted to mount what appeared to them to be the breach, but which was in reality nothing more than an embrasure which had been a good deal injured by the fire of our batteries. Some of the most foremost succeeded in planting ladders against its rugged face, but their efforts were baffled by the exertions of the French engineers, who, notwithstanding our fire of grape and musketry, contrived to clear away the rubbish from the base of the wall; and the ladders were in consequence not of a sufficient length to enable the men to make a lodgment. A quarter of an hour had now elapsed, during which time several fruitless attempts had been made to enter the fort; and Major Macintosh, with his few remaining men, succeeded with difficulty in reaching their own lines, which they had left but a short time before with feelings of a very different description. None of the party could give any account of Ensign Dyas—indeed, how could they? for the storming party had never seen the forlorn-hope, from the moment they descended the ditch! As is common in such cases, there were many who said they believed that he, individually, was the last living man in the ditch, and it was a generally received opinion that Dyas had fallen. Major Macintosh, in company with a few

friends, was sitting in his tent talking over the failure of the attack, and regretting, amongst others, the loss of this officer, when to his amazement he entered the tent, not only alive, but unhurt. This brave young man, after having lost the greater part of his men, and finding himself unsupported by the storming party, at length quitted the ditch, but not until he heard the enemy entering it by the sally-port.

Notwithstanding that we had occupation sufficient within our lines to employ men of ordinary minds, still our fellows—or, as they familiarly called themselves, "the boys,"—found leisure to stroll a little beyond the limits allowed to the soldiers for their recreation. Perhaps in the whole British army, or in the army of any other nation, there were not a set of "boys" who knew better than ours did, how to find out which way the land lay; to see what "was going," or to take share of it, whether it was freely offered to them or attempted to be withheld; their name too, "The Rangers," implied—or they took it in that sense, I believe—their right to make little excursions, which, perhaps, another corps would not think of; and as they never had a turn for desertion, they were not as closely watched as might be necessary with other men; and their officers were never uneasy about them, because they were aware they knew how to take care of themselves.

Under all these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the country about our camp became a spot of some interest to the "boys." Lord Wellington might, and no doubt did reconnoitre Badajoz well, but not one whit better than the aforesaid gentlemen did the neighbouring country.

Not far from the river's edge, and distant about half a league from our lines, stood a snug cottage, at the rear of which was a plantation of olives, and at one side, under the brow of a little hillock, might be seen ten or a dozen bee-hives. Our fellows having tasted

some of the *bitters* of a siege, were resolved to have a trial of the *sweets*, and this congregation of hives, carried by a *coup-de-main*, appeared in their eyes a set-off against the slow process of an operation such as they were engaged in. An attack was immediately resolved on, and as immediately put into execution; one of a party of three, *a nate boy*, volunteered his services, not only to reconnoitre the cottage, but to take a hive off by way of sample, that is, if such was found to be practicable; the other two lay at hand, and were ready to act as circumstances might require. A fellow, named Roger Gafney was the individual who distinguished himself on this occasion; he passed by the rear of the cottage, rendering the caution of the Spaniard of no avail by this flank movement; and taking up one of the hives, rammed it into a sack, which he had borrowed for the occasion from his captain's bâtman. Success had crowned his efforts thus far, and he was carrying off his prize, when upon turning round the clump of olive-trees, he encountered some officers in their undress, who were coursing. "Hallo! what have you in the sack?" said one of them. Roger, at a glance, saw the awkward situation in which he was placed, and that nothing but stratagem could save him. Not in the least abashed, he replied to the question with the same freedom it had been put; thinking, or seeming to think, that those by whom he was addressed, were, like himself, on the look-out. "What have I, is it?—a bee-hive!" "A bee-hive! where did you get it?" "You *mane* to say where did I *find* it; why then, *avick*, I found it where it wasn't lost, and if it's *honey* yees are after, don't be standing here talking to me, but make haste, or by my soul they'll not *lave* yees' a taste, at all, at all." "Who? where?" were the rapid interrogatories put to Roger. "Why. over there *fore-'nents** you," replied he, pointing to a grove of

* Opposite.

trees in the very *opposite* direction of the place where the hives stood. Away galloped the officers to detect the delinquents, and away scampered Roger, lightening himself of his load, which he was reluctantly obliged to leave behind him; and, it is scarcely necessary to say, that on the return of the disappointed officers, they did not find Roger Gafney waiting to receive them. Upon his return to his companions, he was asked why he left the hive behind him; "Why then, sure," said he, "I thought it better to lose the honey, and save *my bacon.*"

On the 7th, 8th, and 9th, the fire against San Christoval was continued with increased vigour, and on the latter day it was resolved that the attack of it should be a second time made that night. A superior number of troops to those which failed on the 6th, but still *inferior* to the garrison of the fort, were selected for the attack, and the command given to Major Mac Geechy, an English Officer in the service of Portugal, who volunteered this duty,—Dyas again leading the forlorn-hope. As before, the troops advanced under the fire of every gun that could be brought to bear upon them, and with much spirit descended the ditch. A little disorder amongst the men who carried the ladders, caused some delay, but the detachment pressed on to the breach without waiting for the re-organization of the ladder-men. The soldiers posted on the glacis, by their determined fire, notwithstanding their exposed situation, forced the enemy to waver, and if ever there was a chance of success, it was at this moment. Dyas and his companions did as much as men could do, but in vain. Their efforts were heroic, though unavailing; the spot was strewed with the dead and dying—the breach was covered with Frenchmen, and the glacis and ditch covered with our dead and disabled soldiers. Major Mac Geechy fell pierced with bullets, and almost all

the party shared his fate. Ensign Dyas was struck by a pellet* in the forehead, and fell upon his face, but, undismayed by this, he sprang up and rallied his few remaining followers, but in vain. This heroic intrepidity deserved a better fate, but his efforts were paralysed by the obstacles opposed to him, and Dyas was at length reluctantly obliged to abandon an enterprise, on the issue of which he had a second time chivalrously, though unsuccessfully, staked his life. As before, he was the last to leave the ditch, and with much difficulty reached our lines: his mode of escape was as curious as it was novel. One of the ladders that could not be placed upright, still hung from the glacis on the pallisadoes; this he sprang up, and in an instant he was upon the glacis, where he flung himself upon his face. The Frenchmen upon the walls seeing him fall at the moment of their fire, shouted out "*Il est tué, en voila le dernier!*"

Dyas, perfectly collected, saw that his only chance of escape was by remaining quiet for a short time, which he did, and then seizing a favourable moment when the garrison were thrown off their guard by the silence that prevailed, he jumped up, and reached our batteries in safety: he and *nineteen* privates were all that escaped out of *two hundred*, which was the original strength of the storming-party and forlorn-hope.

The failure of these two attacks led to many remarks, not only in our own army, but also in that of the enemy. It was our first attempt in the Peninsula to storm a place, and its success or failure was, without doubt, a matter that in a great measure involved the character, not only of the soldiers engaged, but of the two armies generally—it was in fact a national concern.

* A small bullet, larger than a swan drop: four of them were inclosed in a piece of wood, three inches long, and at the top was placed the musket-ball. Upon being discharged the wood burst, and this shrapnel in miniature did considerable execution.

Our fellows knew that if the thing were practicable, success was sure to follow; but the French thought differently, and notwithstanding the defeats they had sustained in the different affairs which preceded this unfortunate event, they considered themselves the same invincible heroes who had conquered on the fields of Marengo and Austerlitz; and this little affair set them quite at ease with themselves. This is a dangerous idea to let a Frenchman get hold of, for though naturally brave, they are, as a nation, or even individually, the most gasconading race on earth—the Yankees always excepted; I shall, therefore, enter a little into the causes of this reverse.

The evening upon which the first assault was made, (the 6th of June,) the storming party consisted of but one hundred men, whilst the garrison of the fort amounted to one hundred and fifty. Dyas at the head of six chosen men, (and accompanied by an officer of engineers, whose name I forget, and who was mortally wounded while he was in conversation with Dyas,) led the advance. The situation of the fort, the bastions that had been disabled by our fire, as also the breach, were well known to both these officers; but the remainder of the party including the commanding-officer, Major Macintosh, it would appear were ignorant upon points of such vital importance. The consequence was fatal. The handful of men that formed the forlorn-hope, led on by their brave young commander, jumped into the ditch, and proceeded along the curtain to the breach, but unfortunately the remainder of the party allowed themselves to be occupied before a dismantled bastion, which they mistook for the real breach. The ladders were lowered into the ditch and raised against this part of the wall; and while the soldiers were endeavouring to place them upright, they were cut off almost to a man. Dyas, finding himself unsupported, ran back from the breach, and having reached the spot

where his companions had been so uselessly, yet fatally employed, found it occupied only by the dead and wounded.

Thus far it was evident that the attack had failed, but it was also proved that the failure was owing to the misconception which the troops had of the real breach, because that portion of the storming party that had the ladders stopped short at a place where they should not. Dyas, although little acquainted with engineering, or not even having had a trial of the ladders, which were but twelve feet long, at once pronounced the breach impracticable. He was immediately ordered to the tent of General Houston, who directed the operations on the right bank of the Guadiana, and there he was closely questioned in the presence of the chief engineer, (I beleive it was Colonel Squires): in answer to a question put to him respecting the depth of the ditch, he said, that he conceived it to be twelve feet, and he, one of the most active men in the army, judged of its depth from the great shock he felt when he jumped down. He was not credited; and the engineer smiling, said that "Certain allowances should be made for *young beginners;*" this was too much for Dyas, but the brave fellow modestly observed that he considered the estimate he had made of the depth of the ditch to be tolerably correct,—and from this moment he made up his mind to head the next attack.

When the breach was again deemed practicable, on the 9th, three days after the first attack and failure, Ensign Dyas waited upon General Houston. and requested his leave once more to lead the advance. The general said, "No, you have already done enough, and it would be unfair that you should again bear the brunt of this business." "Why, general," said Dyas, "there seem to be some doubts of the practicability of this business on the last night of our attack; and, although I myself don't think that the breach is even now prac-

ticable, I request you will allow me to lead the party." The general still refused, when Dyas thus addressed him, "General Houston, I hope you will not refuse my request, because I am determined, if you order the fort to be stormed forty times, to lead the advance so long as I have life." The general, fully appreciating the earnestness of this brave and high-minded young man, at length acquiesced; and Major Mac Geechy having volunteered to command the storming party, he and Dyas made the necessary arrangements to reconnoitre the fort that evening.

They made a detour by the edge of the river, and succeeded in reaching unperceived to within a short distance of the fort. Under cover of some reeds, they carefully examined the breach, which, to Major Mac Geechy, appeared a practicable one; but Dyas, better informed from experience, combated all the arguments of his companion, and desired him to watch attentively the effect of the next salvo from our batteries; he did so, and appeared satisfied with the result, "Because the wall," he remarked to Dyas, "gave way very freely." "Yes," replied Dyas, "but did you observe how the stones *fell* instead of *rolling;* rely on it if there were any rubbish about the base or face of it, the stones would *roll* and not *fall.*" The observation was not lost on Major Mac Geechy, but it having been decided that the attack was to be made that night, both the leader of the forlorn-hope and the commander of the storming party, at once made up their minds for the trial.

At ten o'clock at night, two hundred men moved forward to the assault, Dyas leading the advance. He made a circuit until he came exactly opposite to the breach, instead of entering the ditch as before: a sheep-path, which he remembered in the evening while he and Major Mac Geechy made their observations, served to guide them to the part of the *glacis* in front

of the breach. Arrived at this spot, the detachment descended the ditch, and found themselves at the foot of the breach; but here an unlooked-for event stopped their further progress, and would have been in itself sufficient to have caused the failure of the attack. The ladders were entrusted to a party composed of a foreign corps in our pay, called "the Chasseurs Britanniques." These men, the moment they reached the glacis, glad to rid themselves of their load, flung the ladders into the ditch, instead of sliding them between the palisadoes; they fell across them, and so stuck fast, and being made of heavy green wood, it was next to impossible to *move*, much less place them upright against the breach, and almost all the storming party were massacred in the attempt.

Placed in a situation so frightful, it required a man of the most determined character to continue the attack. Every officer of the detachment had fallen, Major Mac Geechy one of the first; and at this moment Dyas and about five-and-twenty men were all that remained of the two hundred. Undismayed by these circumstances, the soldiers persevered, and Dyas, although wounded and bleeding, succeeded in disentangling one ladder, and placing it against what was considered to be the breach; it was speedily mounted, but upon arriving at the top of the ladder, instead of the *breach*, it was found to be a *stone wall* that had been constructed in the night, and which completely cut of all communication between the ditch and the bastion, so that when the men reached the top of this wall, they were, in effect, as far from the breach as if they had been in their own batteries. From this faithful detail it is evident that the soldiers did as much as possible to ensure success, and that the failure was owing to a combination of untoward circumstances over which the troops had no control. Nineteen men were all that escaped.

On the night of the 8th of June, (the one previous

to the second assault,) Ensign Dyas being on duty in the trenches, an order arrived to send an officer and fifteen men to a hollow spot in front of our lines, between San Christoval and the *tête du pont*, close to the Roman bridge which communicated with the Elvas gate. I know not how it happened, but Dyas was selected for this arduous duty. The object of this movement was for the purpose of observing if any and what communication or reinforcement would be sent to the fort. The detachment was to be recalled before day.

The night was unusually still, and every sound was distinctly heard, but nothing could be ascertained except that one piece of ordnance (a howitzer, I believe,) had passed over to the fort. Day at last began to dawn, yet no order had been received for the withdrawal of the party so stationed; their situation was most critical—within point blank shot of the fort in their rear. Dyas ordered his men to lie flat on their faces, though he every moment expected his situation would be discovered, and a rush made at him; nevertheless, unintimidated by his perilous posture, he dispatched a trusty man to the trenches, with orders to make known to the officer commanding, the information he had been enabled to collect, and to know what was to be the final duty of the party.

"Now, mind," said Dyas, "*if* we are to be recalled, do you raise your cap on your firelock above the battery No. 1; if we are to remain, *you know what your duty is.*" "By J——, and plase your honour, *I do;* and recall or no recall, I'll be back with you in five minutes, dead or alive," replied the poor fellow, who, I need not add, (after his speech,) was an Hibernian. "Do as you are ordered, sir," said Dyas, "we have not a moment to lose."

A few minutes (a long time under such circumstances) only elapsed before the signal agreed upon

was made; the cap was hoisted, and Dyas knew that he and his party were to retire. He addressed a few words to his men, and told them that their safety depended on their adhering strictly to his directions. He then started them *singly* to different parts of the lines, and singular as it may appear, although it was now clear daylight, not one man was hit. What a fine fellow at the head of a regiment would this Dyas be! He possessed all the requisites necessary to make a first-rate officer,—bravery, tact, and head!

It may, perhaps, be asked by persons unacquainted with these details, what became of Ensign Dyas; and they no doubt will say what a lucky young man he was to gain promotion in so short a time; but such was not the case, although he was duly recommended by Lord Wellington. This was no doubt an oversight, as it afterwards appeared, but the consequences have been of material injury to Ensign, now Captain, Dyas. This officer, like most brave men, was too modest to press his claim, and after having served through the entire of the Peninsular war, and afterwards at the memorable battle of Waterloo, he, in the year 1820—*ten years after his gallant conduct*—was, by *a mere chance*, promoted to a company, in consequence of the representation of Colonel Gurwood (another, but more lucky, forlorn-hope man) to Sir Henry Torrens.

Colonel Gurwood was a perfect stranger (except by character) to Dyas, and was with his regiment, the 10th Hussars, at Hampton Court, where Sir Henry Torrens inspected the 51st Regiment. Colonel Ponsonby and Lord Wiltshire, (not one of whom Dyas had ever seen,) also interested themselves in his behalf; and immediately on Sir Henry Torrens arriving in London, he overhauled the documents connected with the affair of San Christoval, and finding all that had been reported to him to be perfectly correct, he drew the attention

of His Royal Highness the Duke of York to the claims of Lieutenant Dyas.

His Royal Highness, with that consideration for which he was remarkable, immediately caused Lieutenant Dyas to be Gazetted to a company in the 1st Ceylon regiment.

Captain Dyas lost no time in waiting upon Sir Henry Torrens and His Royal Highness the Duke of York. The Duke received him with his accustomed affability, and after regretting that his promotion had been so long overlooked, asked him what leave of absence he would require before he joined his regiment. Captain Dyas said, "Six months, if His Royal Highness did not think it too long." "Perhaps," replied the Duke, "you would prefer two years." Captain Dyas was overpowered by this considerate condescension on the part of the Duke, and after having thanked him, took a respectful leave; but the number of campaigns he had served in, had materially injured his health, and he was obliged to retire on the half-pay of his company.

CHAPTER XII.

Affair of El Bodon—Gallant conduct of the 5th and 77th Regiments—Narrow escape of the 88th from being made prisoners—Picton's conduct on the retreat of Guinaldo.

At eleven o'clock at night, on the 9th of June, 1811, the siege of Badajoz virtually ceased. From the moment the second attack against San Christoval was repulsed, Lord Wellington resolved to make the best of a bad business, and he converted the siege into a blockade. On the 10th, the battering train and stores were removed from the trenches, and by the 13th our works were clear. The town was closely blockaded until the 17th, on which day we broke up from before the place, and crossing the Guadiana by the ford above San Christoval, reached the banks of the Caya, in the neighbourhood of Aronches, a little after noon.

Soult was aware of this movement, but whether he was apprehensive of its being a feint to draw him into a separate action before he was joined by the army of Portugal, or that the battle of Albuera had made him cautious of again coming in contact with the British troops, without a great superiority in numbers on his side, is best known to himself; but this much is certain, that although the road to Badajoz from Fuente-del-Maestro, by the village of Albuera, was open to him, he never once attempted to molest us.

It appeared from the different reports of our spies, that the whole disposable force, not only of the army of the South, but likewise that of Portugal, were in march against us; and Lord Wellington accordingly took up a defensive position near Elvas, with his advance at Campo Mayor, consisting of the third and seventh divisions of infantry, while Blake's corps of Spaniards recrossed the Guadiana near Mertola.

The Dukes of Dalmatia and Ragusa formed their junction at Badajoz on the 28th, and the two Marshals dined there together on that day; great praise was bestowed upon General Phillipon for his fine defence of the place, and, as a matter of course, much bombastic stuff was trumpeted forth in the papers about the valour displayed by the Imperial soldiers on the occasion. Our losses were rated at more than four times their real amount; and though no blame was attached by the enemy to our troops, the engineers were attacked with a severity that I have reason to think was unjust. One writer speaking on the subject says,—

"But in spite of the valour of the assailants, they were repulsed; because, contrary to the rules of the art, they had not taken the precaution of being masters of the ditch, in order to prevent the entrance of the besieged into it. This blunder on the part of the English engineers had not escaped the observation of the French Governor, Phillipon. As soon as it was night, he sent miners into the ditch, to clean the foot of the breach, and thus render it impracticable. When the English came, they not only could not reach the steep breach by climbing, but their ladders also proved too short, on account of the height to which the miners had raised the new parapet."

And the same writer again observes,—

"Had the engineers followed the rules of fortification with as much ability as his lordship displayed in

the application of the principles of the higher branches of tactics, Badajoz would, no doubt, have surrendered about the 14th or 15th of June. It scarcely would be believed, were it not expressly mentioned in the official reports, that in the beginning of the nineteenth century, troops should have been sent to the assault with ladders after the breach had been judged practicable."

I shall leave it to the gentlemen of the engineers to answer these remarks; but for myself, I cannot conceive how it would be possible for us to make ourselves "masters of the ditch," while there was a French garrison in the fort! What the general feeling on this subject may be, I profess myself ignorant of; the situation of troops so posted would, I have no doubt, be one of high distinction; but I am quite certain, that I know at the least one individual who would not give a pin's point to be amongst the number so honoured, and that individual is the writer of these Adventures. As far as I have been able to collect the facts, and I have received my information from good, I might say, the best authority, our defeat before San Christoval arose from three causes; first, the want of knowledge displayed by the officer commanding the first attack of the real situation of the breach, and owing to the unfortunate circumstance of the engineer being killed at the onset; secondly, the shortness of the ladders, and the smallness of the storming party each night; and, thirdly, the conduct of the men who were entrusted with the charge of the ladders—a foreign corps it is true; but why employ troops of this description upon a service so desperate?

There is no duty which a British soldier performs before an enemy that he does with so much reluctance —a retreat always excepted—as working in trenches. Although essentially necessary to the accomplishment of the most gallant achievement a soldier can aspire to—the storming a breach—it is an inglorious call-

ing; one full of danger, attended with great labour, and, what is even worse, with a deal of annoyance; and for this reason, that the soldiers are not only taken quite out of their natural line of action, but they are, if not entirely, at least partially, commanded by officers, those of the engineers, whose habits are totally different from what they have been accustomed to.

No two animals ever differed more completely in their propensities than the British engineer and the British infantry soldier; the latter delights in an open field, and a fair "stand-up-fight," where he meets his man or men (for numbers, when it comes to a hand to hand business, are of little weight with the British soldier); if he falls there, he does so, in the opinion of his comrades, with credit to himself; but a life lost in the trenches is looked upon as one thrown away and lost ingloriously. The engineer, on the contrary, braves all the dangers of a siege with a cheerful countenance, he even courts them, and no mole ever took greater delight in burrowing through a sand-hill, than an engineer does in mining a covert-way, or blowing up a counterscarp: not so with the infantry soldier, who is obliged to stand to be shot at, with a pick-axe or shovel in his hand, instead of his firelock and bayonet. If, then, this is a trying situation, as it unquestionably is for a soldier, where death by round-shot and shell in the works is comparatively less than it is at the moment of the assault of a breach, how much more care should there be taken in the selection of the ladder men, than appears to have been the case at San Christoval?

Beyond all question or doubt, the advance of a column to escalade should be preceded by a force consisting of the best description of troops, commanded by a field-officer of tried valour, and seconded by others, though of inferior rank, equal to their superior in this essential qualification. In point of *qualification* it ought even to supersede, if possible, those of the forlorn-hope!

What caused the great loss in the second attack of San Christoval? The misconduct of the men who carried the ladders; because, had these even been long enough, which they were not, the immense loss of time, and the consequent loss of lives which took place before they could be brought up to the face of the breach, in consequence of the gross misconduct of the men that carried them, was in itself enough to cause the failure of the enterprise.

On the 22nd of June, the two French Marshals moved a large body of troops towards Elvas and Campo Mayor, in order to cover their *reconnoissance* of the position of our army. Some skirmishing between the cavalry took place, but nothing serious was the result, and the loss in killed and wounded trifling. A squadron of our 11th Light Dragoons, mistaking a French hussar regiment for a Spanish corps, were surrounded and captured.

Our army at this time counted about sixty-six thousand men, of which number only six thousand were cavalry. The combined French army exceeded us by about ten thousand, and in the arm of horse they were upwards of three thousand our superiors. Notwithstanding this disproportion of force, Lord Wellington had made able dispositions to beat the Freach Marshals in detail, and there is little or no doubt but that he would have succeeded, had Marmont been acting in concert with a man as presumptuous as himself; but Soult was too good a judge not to see the sort of adversary he was opposed to, and it was not possible to entrap him. Albuera taught him a lesson.

After the *reconnoissance* of the 22nd, and after supplies had been thrown into Badajoz, the enemy took up the quarters he had occupied previous to the junction of the armies of Portugal and the South;—the army of Soult in the neighbourhood of Seville, that of Marmont at Placentia. The seventh and third divi-

sion of our army occupied Campo Mayor, and having got ourselves and our appointments into good order, we began to have all the annoyances of garrison duty, which was not lessened by the presence of three or four general officers. The mounting of guard, the salute, and all the minutiæ of our profession, were attended to with a painful particularity; and poor old General Sontag was near falling a sacrifice to his zeal on this particular point of duty. This officer was by birth either a German or Prussian, I don't know which, but, from his costume, I should myself say that he was a disciple of the Grand Frederick: he was a great Martinet, and had all the appearance of one brought up in the school of that celebrated warrior, and might have passed, and deservedly so, for aught I know to the contrary, for one who had served in the "Seven Years' War." His dress was singular, though plain: he usually wore a cocked hat and jacket, tight blue pantaloons, and brown top hunting-boots.

One day, when it came to my tour of duty, General Sontag was the senior officer on the parade. Mounted on a spirited horse, he took his station in front to receive the "salute;" when the band of my regiment, much more celebrated for its harshness and noise than its sweetness, struck up as discordant a jumble of sounds as ever proceeded from the same number of wind instruments; the animal, a German horse, and no doubt with a good ear for music, took fright, and standing upright on his hinder legs, commenced pawing and snorting in a manner that astounded every one present, the old General alone excepted; he continued immoveably steady in his saddle, from which a less skilful or an inexperienced rider must inevitably have been flung, and sawed his horse's mouth with such effect, as to compel him to resume his former and more natural position; but, unfortunately at this moment, the drum-major, who justly estimated the cause of the refractory

movements of the brute, made a flourish with his mace, as a token for the band—music I can't call it—to desist, and so terrified the animal, that he made a sudden plunge to get away, but was so firmly held by the grip of his rider, that his feet came from under him, and both the General and his charger were prostrate on the ground in a second.

It was an alarming, as well as a ludicrous exhibition: for a moment the General was unable to disentangle his foot from one of the stirrups, and when he got rid, after much exertion, of this incumbrance, he lost not only his hat, but his wig also; providentially he sustained no injury, and every one was glad of it. He was a man much esteemed in his brigade, and had, perhaps, the largest nose in the world! he was humorously styled by some Marshal (Nez) Ney! His nose hung in two huge flaps under his cheek-bone, and their colour and size were like two red mogul plums. Joe Kelly said that he would be a capital *gardener*, "because he always had his fruit under his eye!"

A few weeks terminated our sojourn here, and the day of our leaving it was a delightful one to us all. We marched to the northern frontier, which we considered as our own natural element; for in this quarter we witnessed nothing but reverses, and our division had no opportunity of keeping up its established name. The country between the river Coa and the Agueda was filled with troops. The third division occupied Aldea de Ponte, Albergaria, and the neighbouring villages. Gallegos, Espeja, Carpio, El Bodon, and Pastores, were likewise occupied; and Ciudad Rodrigo might be said to be invested; the garrison were, at all events, much circumscribed in the extent of country for their foragers, but, nevertheless, they made some successful excursions to the nearest villages, such as Pastores and El Bodon. The 11th Light Dragoons, stationed at the latter, were considerably annoyed by

the nocturnal visits of the garrison; and independent of the difficulty which a cavalry out-post has to contend with against an experienced infantry, thoroughly acquainted with the country in which they are acting, the 11th had but lately joined the army from England, and could not be said to be accustomed to the climate, or to have gained a sufficient knowledge of the French troops, or of out-post duty, to enable them to cope with their veteran antagonists.

The towns had been almost all robbed of bread and wine, the sheepfolds entered, and the spoil carried off, before the cavalry could be got together from their distant stabling, and be in a state to act. A regiment of infantry was, therefore, thought necessary to co-operate with the cavalry, and mine (the 88th) was the one selected; and it was a good choice, for the men had a natural turn for independent acting, and I never saw that set of fellows who would so soon make themselves acquainted with a country, or a good large town either.

General Picton, no matter what his other faults might be, (and who is there amongst us without one?) knew well what he was about when he sent "the Rangers of Connaught" to support the 11th; he was aware that before many hours after their arrival in their quarters, they would be tolerably well acquainted with the resources of the country about them; and that though now and then, perhaps, in a case of emergency, they might enlist an odd sheep or goat into their own corps, they would not allow another to do it. The General was right, and thought it better that a few sheep should be lost, than an entire pen of them carried off in triumph, and our dragoons (the worst of it!) bearded to the edge (almost) of their sabres.

We were not long unemployed. On the tenth night after our arrival the enemy made a formidable attack on our advance at the village of Pastores. The advanced sentry, Jack Walsh, passed the word to the

next, who communicated with the picket, and in an instant every man was on his legs. Walsh waited quietly until the French officer who headed the advance approached to within a few paces of where he was standing, when he deliberately took aim at him, and shot him dead. The remainder retired for a moment, panic struck, no doubt, at the fate of their leader; they, however, rallied—for they were not only brave, but, what is almost as great a stimulus, hungry—and they forced our advance to give way: but Colonel Alexander Wallace placing himself at the head of his men, drove back this band of cormorants, and they never molested us afterwards.

Notwithstanding that we were thus placed with respect to Rodrigo, the army of Portugal maintained its position; the army of the North, commanded by Count Dorsenne, remained in its cantonments on the Douro, and Rodrigo was thus abandoned to its own resources.

Lord Wellington was not an idle spectator of this supineness on the part of the two French Generals. As early as the month of August, he directed that a large number of the tradesmen of our army, with a proportion of officers, should be attached to the Engineers, in which branch we were deficient in point of numbers; and these men in less than six weeks gained much useful information, and besides, made a quantity of fascines and gabions sufficient for the intended operations. By the 5th of September the town of Ciudad Rodrigo was completely blockaded, and we were employed in making arrangements for its siege, when the two Generals, Dorsenne and Marmont, made theirs to drive us back on Portugal.

On the 22nd of September they formed their junction at Tamames, which is about three leagues distant from Rodrigo. Their united force amounted to sixty thousand men, including six thousand horse; ours to

not quite fifty thousand, including the force necessary to observe the garrison. We could not, therefore, taking it for granted, as a matter of course, that we wished to maintain the blockade, have brought forty thousand bayonets and sabres into the field, with an inferiority too in cavalry of two thousand! This, in a country so well calculated for the operations of that arm, at once decided Lord Wellington, and he raised the blockade on the 24th.

Previous to these movements, an intrenched camp had been formed at Fuente-Guinaldo, and this point was fixed upon for the union of our army. General Graham occupied the line of the Azava with a numerous advanced guard; General Picton, with the third division, was posted in the vicinity of El Bodon; while General Robert Craufurd, with the light division, occupied the opposite bank of the Agueda. The fourth division, under the command of General Cole, was at Fuente-Guinaldo; and the other divisions of our army (the northern) were in cantonments close by, ready to act as might be deemed necessary.

Early on the morning of the 25th, the French army were in motion; the cavalry, underGeneral Montbrun, supported by several battalions of infantry, advanced upon the position held by our third division; but the over zeal of Montbrun, and the impetuosity of his cavalry, would not allow them to keep pace with the infantry, who were in consequence completely distanced at the onset, and never regained their place during the day.

The ground occupied by the third division was of considerable extent, and might, to an ordinary observer, appear to be such as to place that corps in some peril of being defeated in detail: for instance, the 5th Regiment, supported by the 77th, two weak battalions, barely reckoning seven hundred men, were considerably to the left, and in advance of El Bodon,

and were distant upwards of one mile from the 45th, 74th, and 88th; while the 83rd and 94th British, and the 9th and 21st Portuguese were little, if any thing, closer to those two battalions; some squadrons of the first German Hussars and 11th Light Dragoons supported the advance, and a brigade of nine pounders, drawn by mules, and served by Portuguese gunners, under the command of a German Major, named Arentschild, crowned the causeway occupied by the 5th and 77th.

These dispositions were barely completed, when Montbrun, at the head of his veteran host, came thundering over the plain at a sweeping pace; ten of his squadrons dashed across the ravine that separated them from Arentschild's battery, which opened a frightful fire of grape and canister at point blank distance, but although the havock made by those guns was great, it in no way damped the ardour of the French horse; they panted for glory, and nothing of this kind could check their impetuosity: once fairly over the ravine, they speedily mounted the face of the causeway, and desperately, but heroically charged the battery. Nothing could resist the torrent,—the battery was captured, and the cannoniers massacred at their guns.

In an instant, the 5th, commanded by the gallant Major Ridge, formed line, threw in an effective running fire, steadily ascended the height, charged the astonished French Dragoons, and having repulsed and poured a volley into the latter, as they rushed down the opposite face of the hill, recaptured the guns, with which, joined by the 77th, they deliberately retired across the open plain after a long and determined stand against the enemy's cavalry and artillery, and only retreating when the approach of a strong body of French infantry rendered such a movement imperative.

Flushed with his first success, Montbrun, at the head of his victorious squadrons, now thought to ride through the 5th and 77th, but this handful of heroes threw themselves into square, and received the attack with unflinching steadiness. Nothing but the greatest discipline, the most undaunted bravery, and a firm reliance on their officers, could have saved these devoted soldiers from total annihilation; they were attacked with a fury unexampled on three faces of the square—the French horsemen rode upon their bayonets, but unshaken by the desperate position in which they were placed, they poured in their fire with such quickness and precision, that the cavalry retired in disorder.

To re-unite the 5th and 77th with the other corps of the third division, was a task of no easy accomplishment, because that division was of necessity much extended, and the French cavalry were so numerous, that they were enabled to traverse the plain upon which the 5th and 77th were about to manœuvre; nevertheless these two regiments joined the 83rd British and the 9th and 21st Portuguese, the whole being now directed by General Colville. The brigade of guns, also made good their retrograde movement, with the loss, however, of half their gunners, who were cut down on the hill.

While this was taking place on the left, the regiments of the right brigade were posted on a height, parallel to that occupied by the 5th and 77th; we had a clear, and painful view of all that was passing,—and we shuddered for our companions; the glittering of the countless sabres that were about to assail them, and the blaze of light which the reflection of the sun threw across the brazen helmets of the French horsemen, might be likened to the flash of lightning that preceded the thunder of Arentschild's artillery,—but we could do nothing. A few seconds passed away,

we saw the smoke of the musketry,—it did not recede, and we were assured that the attack had failed; in a moment or two more we could discern the brave 5th and 77th following their beaten adversaries, and a spontaneous shout of joy burst from the brigade. What would we have given at that moment to have been near them? They were not only our companions in arms, but our intimate friends (I mean the 5th, for the 77th had but just joined the army, and were comparatively strangers to us.) But we were now menaced ourselves. From the great space that intervened between the regiments that had been engaged and those that had hitherto been unoccupied, it was not easy, taking into account the mass of French cavalry that covered the plain, to re-unite the third division. Lord Wellington, it is true, was on the spot, but the *spot* was a large one, with but few troops to cover it, and had the French cavalry done their duty on that day, I doubt much if the third division would not have ceased to exist! Meanwhile the time was passing away without the enemy undertaking any thing serious; but the 5th and 77th, and the other troops under General Colville, seeing the danger of their position, and profiting by the inaction of the French troopers, who seemed to be paralyzed after their failure, made one of the most memorable retreats on record, across the plain, surrounded by three times their own number of horse, and exposed to the fire of a battery of eight pounders; but the 45th, 74th, and 88th had not yet been able to disentangle themselves from the rugged ground and vineyards to the rear of El Bodon, and their junction with the remainder of the division might be said to be at this moment (three o'clock) rather problematical, because the French light horse, and Polish lancers, not meeting with a force of our cavalry sufficient to stop their progress, spread themselves over

the face of the country, capturing our baggage and stores, and threatening to prevent the junction of the right brigade with the other two.

While the French might be said to have the undisputed possession of the entire field of battle, over which they were pouring an immense mass of dragoons, followed by infantry and artillery, the regiments of our division which were in column, continued their retrograde movement upon Fuente-Guinaldo; the 45th and 74th had by this time cleared the rugged ground and enclosures, and were in march to join the remainder of the column, but the 88th were most unaccountably left in a vineyard, which was enclosed by a loose stone wall. In the hurry of the moment they might, and I believe would, have been forgotten, had not the soldiers, who became impatient upon hearing the clashing of weapons outside the enclosure, burst down several openings in the wall, by which means they not only saw the danger of the position in which their comrades were placed, but also the hopelessness of their own, if they did not speedily break down the walls that incarcerated them; for our 1st Hussars and 11th Light Dragoons were giving way before the overpowering weight of the enemy's horse, while the bulk of the third division were marching in a line, parallel to the enclosure occupied by the 88th; so it was manifest, that if this regiment did not at the instant break from its prison, a few moments would have decided its fate, and left the third division *minus* the Connaught Rangers.

Each moment that we remained was of consequence, and the delay of five minutes would have been fatal; we were without orders, and were at a loss how to act; but nothing tends more to bring the energies of men into action than their seeing clearly the danger that they are placed in, and the consciousness that their only means of escaping it depends

upon their firm reliance on themselves. Some officers called out to have the wall broken down, and in a second, several openings were made in it; every officer made the greatest efforts to supply, by his own particular dispositions, such as were on the whole necessary; but an operation of so delicate a nature, made in the face of a powerful antagonist, could not be performed with as much order and regularity as was desirable. From the great coolness of the men, and the intelligence and gallantry of the officers, the regiment was at last extricated from its dangerous position, but it was far, very far from being safe yet; and had the French dragoons, at the close of the day, shown the same determination they did at its commencement, not one man of the 88th would have escaped, because from the isolated situation of that regiment, and the nature of its movement, it might have been cut off by companies, in the attempt to complete its formation outside the enclosure, as every company was obliged to act as an independent body, and as may be supposed, some confusion was unavoidable.

We had scarcely cleared the enclosure, when we witnessed a series of petty combats between our horse and that of the enemy, some of whom had posted themselves directly between us and our intrenched camp at Fuente-Guinaldo; immediately in our front, some of Lord Wellington's staff were personally engaged with the French troopers; and one of them, either Captain Burgh, or the young Prince of Orange, owed his life to the excellence of his horse. Lieutenant King, of the 11th Dragoons, lost one arm by a sabre cut; Prior, of the same regiment, had all his front teeth knocked out by a musket shot, and Mrs. Howley, the black cymbal-man's wife of the 88th, was captured by a lancer. The fate of the officers I have mentioned was deplored, but the los

of Mrs. Howley was a source of grief to the entire division. The officers so maimed might be replaced by others, but perhaps in the entire army such another woman, take her for all and all, as Mrs. Howley could not be found. The 88th at length took its place in the column at quarter distance, and the third division continued its retrograde movement.

Montbrun, at the head of fifteen squadrons of light horse, pressed closely on our right flank, and made every demonstration of attacking us, with the view of engaging our attention until the arrival of his infantry and artillery, of which latter only one battery was in the field: but General Picton saw the critical situation in which he was placed, and that nothing but the most rapid, and at the same time most regular movement upon Guinaldo could save his division from being cut off to a man. For six miles across a perfect flat, without the slightest protection from any incident of ground, without artillery, and I might say without cavalry, (for what were four or five squadrons to twenty or thirty?) did the third division continue its march, during the whole of which the enemy's cavalry never quitted them; a park of six guns advanced with the cavalry, and taking the third division in flank and rear, poured in a frightful fire of round-shot, grape, and canister; many men fell in this way, and those whose wounds rendered them unable to march were obliged to be abandoned to the enemy.

This was a trying and pitiable situation for troops to be placed in, but it in no way shook the courage or confidence of the soldiers; so far from being dispirited or cast down, the men were cheerful and gay; the soldiers of my corps (the 88th) telling their officers, that if the French dared to charge, every officer should have a *nate* horse to ride upon.

General Picton conducted himself with his accustomed coolness; he remained on the left flank of the

column, and repeatedly cautioned the different battalions to mind the quarter distance and the "tellings off." "Your safety," added he, "my credit, and the honour of the army, is at stake: all rests with you at this moment." We had reached to within a mile of our entrenched camp, when Montbrun, impatient lest we should escape from his grasp, ordered his troopers to bring up their right shoulders, and incline towards our column: the movement was not exactly bringing his squadrons into line, but it was the next thing to it, and at this time they were within half pistol-shot of us. Picton took off his hat, and holding it over his eyes, as a shade from the sun, looked sternly, but anxiously at the French; the clatter of the horses, and the clanking of the scabbards were so great, when the right half squadron moved up, that many thought it the forerunner of a general charge; some mounted officer called out, "Had we not better form square?" "No," replied Picton; "it is but a *ruse* to frighten us, but it won't do."

At this moment a cloud of dust was discernible in the direction of Guinaldo; it was a cheering sight; it covered the third Dragoon Guards, who came up at a slinging trot to our relief; when this fine regiment approached to within a short distance of us, they dismounted, tightened their girths, and prepared for battle; but the French horse slackened their pace, and in half an hour more, we were safe within our lines. The light division, which were also critically circumstanced on this memorable day, joined us in the morning, and thus the whole army was re-united.

CHAPTER XIII.

Retreat of the French army—Bombast of the French generals—Vultures on the field of battle—The Light Division and Private theatricals—Major Leckie and the musician—Privations—The Connaught Rangers and the sheep—Deficient kits—Military movements—Attack on a French division.

THE Duke of Ragusa and the Count Dorsenne employed themselves the whole of the day (the 26th of September) in reconnoitring the ground we occupied, and every thing announced that a battle would be fought the next day, (which had it taken place, would have been the anniversary of the battle of Busaco, gained by us the preceding year,) but Lord Wellington observing a considerable body of troops moved upon his left, apparently with the intention of turning it, withdrew from his entrenched camp in the course of the night, to the neighbourhood of Alfayates, leaving the fourth division, commanded by General Cole, at Aldea-de-Ponte.

At break of day on the 27th, the French army were in motion, but their surprise seemed great on finding our lines unoccupied. Marmont pushed his advance upon the village of Aldea-de-Ponte, and a gallant affair for our fourth division took place there. The two regiments of Fusileers particularly distinguished

themselves, and repulsed the enemy at the point of the bayonet. Night put an end to this affair, which cost us a couple of hundred men, and nearly double that number fell on the side of the French.

The enemy being but ill supplied with provisions, and the country in which they now were (Portugal) being quite unsuited to their operations, as well as unable to supply their wants, the French Marshal, having provisioned Rodrigo, which was the object sought for when he formed his junction with the army of the north, resolved upon retracing his steps, which he did on the following day, the 28th.

Both Marshal Marmont and the Count Dorsenne wrote accounts of their operations to Berthier, the War Minister, which were amusing enough. They both accuse Lord Wellington of having posted his men badly, and of committing all kinds of blunders; but still they admit that, with sixty thousand men under their command, they were unable to disorganize a single battalion, or take one piece of cannon. Dorsenne says, "Could we have foreseen that this General" (meaning Lord Wellington) "would have been guilty of such a fault, we might have taken part of the English by separate combats; but our infantry only arrived at night." And he thus concludes as bombastic a dispatch as ever came from under the hand of a French Marshal or Count, "Were the moment fixed for the catastrophe of the English arrived, we should have followed the enemy up to the lines of Lisbon. Whenever the Emperor shall think the proper moment arrived for driving the English definitively from the Peninsula, his Majesty will not find in any other army more zeal and devotion." What stuff is all this! Every person knew well that Marmont had not more than ten days' provisions for his army, and that it could not subsist in Portugal, which had

been so completely exhausted by its occupation by Massena the preceding year; besides, double the number of the united force of Dorsenne and the Duke of Ragusa, would have been inadequate to the task of forcing the lines of Lisbon; but I never knew a Frenchman who would stop at a good bounce if it suited his purpose.

Lord Wellington issued a most flattering order to the troops engaged on the 25th, and so delighted was he with the conduct of the 5th and 77th, that he held them up as an example to the army. On the 29th, we went into cantonments, our division occupying Aldea-de-Ponte; and until our arrival there, I had no idea the loss of men and horses on the 27th had been so great. The ground was thickly covered with both, and immense numbers of vultures had already established themselves in the neighbourhood. These birds, the sure harbinger of a disputed field, crowded around us in vast flocks; whether this was owing, to the lateness of the season, or to a scantiness in the supply of their accustomed food, I know not; but the voracity of these birds, and consequently their boldness, was beyond any thing I had ever before witnessed. In many instances they would throw off their ordinary wariness, and strut before the carcase they were devouring, as if they supposed we were about to dispute their pretensions to it; but it is astonishing what birds of this description will do when really pressed by hunger.

Fuente-Guinaldo was occupied by our light division, who made that town agreeable both to themselves, and also to their brothers in arms, not only by their hospitality, but by the attraction of their theatrical performances, which were got up in a style quite astonishing, considering the place, and the difficulties which they must have found in supplying themselves

with suitable costume; but the light division had an *esprit du corps* among them, whether in the field or quarters that must be seen to be understood. Their *dramatis personæ* were admirable, and Captain Kent of the Rifles, by his great abilities, rendered every performance in which he took a part doubly attractive. The third division, although unable to cope with the light, in this species of amusement, got up races, which, though inferior to those of the former year at Torres Vedras, were far from bad; amongst the jockies was one, an officer in the Portuguese service, who, though an excellent horseman, was, without exception, the ugliest man in the division, or perhaps, in the army. Major Leckie, of the 45th, took the greatest dislike to him on this account, and gave him the name of "Ugly Mug,"—by which cognomen he was after known.

Just as the horses were about to start for a tolerably heavy stake, I went up to Leckie, who was one of the most knowing men on our turf. "Well, Leckie," said I, "who's the winning jockey to-day?" "Why look," replied he, "I've laid it on thick, myself, upon Wilde's horse, Albuquerke, and tortured as I am with this infernal attack of gout, (to which he was a great martyr,) I have hobbled out to witness the race; but, my dear fellow, I don't care one rush who wins, provided *Mug* loses." However, *Mug* won his race easily, and poor Leckie went home quite out of sorts; whether from the effect of his favourite horse losing, or "Mug's" winning, or that the exertion was too much for him, I know not, but upon his return to Aldea-de-Ponte, he was seized with a violent attack of gout; towards midnight he was a little more composed, and had just sunk into a gentle slumber, when he was awoke by a young Ensign who had lately joined, and who occupied an apartment in the house where Leckie was quartered. This officer played a little on the violin, and had a

very good voice; he began to practise both, and commenced singing the little air in Paul and Virginia of

> " Tell her I love her while the clouds drop rain,
> Or while there's water in the pathless main ;"

but whether from being imperfect in the song, or that those particular lines struck his fancy, he never got beyond than. Leckie became very fidgety — every scrape of the violin touched his heart, but in a far different manner from that in which it seemed to affect the performer; a quarter of an hour passed on, and the same lines were repeated; at last the accompaniment grew fainter and fainter, until it died away altogether.

Leckie became composed; " Well!" exclaimed he, " that young fellow is at rest for the night, and so I hope shall I," and he was beginning to settle himself in a more easy posture, when the same sounds reassailed him—this was too bad! He sprang out of bed,—the perspiration rolling in large drops down his forehead; he rushed to the door of the Ensign's apartment, which he forced at one push, and in a second was standing before the astonished musician in his shirt. The fatal words, " Tell her I love her," had just been uttered, and he was preparing to add, " while the clouds drop rain," when Leckie exclaimed, " By God! Sir, I'll tell her anything you wish, if you'll only allow me to sleep for half an hour." It would be impossible to convey an idea of the confusion of the young man, upon finding his commanding officer before him at such a time and upon such an occasion —he made a thousand apologies; and poor Leckie, who was one of the pleasantest fellows in the world, in spite of his pain, could not avoid laughing at the occurrence, which amused him to the hour of his death.

Matters being in the state I have described in the month of October, 1811, and as there was no likelihood

of any active operations taking place, we began to make ourselves as comfortable as the wretched village of Aldea-de-Ponte would admit of. Any person acquainted with a Portuguese cottage, will readily acknowledge that a good chimney is not its fort; we therefore turned all the skill our masons possessed, to the construction of fire-places that would not smoke, and it required all their knowledge in the arcana of their profession to succeed even in part; however they did succeed, partially, I must admit, but it was easy to satisfy us, and we made up for the badness of our fire-places, by stocking them abundantly with wood, of which article there was no lack; but we had barely sufficient straw to keep our horses and mules alive, much less afford ourselves a bed. In the entire village, I believe, there were not a dozen mattresses. Provisions were but ill supplied us, and we were reduced to subsist upon half allowance of bad biscuit; as to money, we had scarcely a sou, for although there was plenty of specie in Lisbon for our use, the want of animals to convey it to the army, left us as ill off as if there had not been a dollar in the chest of the Pay-master-General: so that between smokey houses, no beds, little to eat, and less money; we were in any thing but what might be termed "good winter quarters."

This state of privation was sadly annoying to the soldiers, and the men of my corps, or, as I am more in the habit of calling them, "the boys," were much perplexed as to what they would do. Several desertions had taken place in the army, but our fellows did not like that at all-at-all. "Why, then, by my sowl," said Owen Mackguekin, of the Grenadiers, "I think misther Strahan, the commissary, is grately to blame to keep us poor boys without mate to ate, when those pizanos have plenty of good sheep and goats; and sure if they'd ate them themselves, a man wouldn't

say anything; but they'll neither ate them, nor give us lave to do so, and sure a'tanny rate, *bacallóo* and *azete* is good enough for them." I need scarcely remark, that an argument so full of sound sense, was not likely to be thrown away upon the hearers of Owen Mackguekin. From this moment our fellows determined to be their own commissaries.

For some weeks there had been a general defalcation amongst the different neighbouring flocks; and the Portuguese shepherds, confounded to know what had become of them, armed themselves, and kept watch with a degree of vigilance that they were heretofore unaccustomed to. Wolves, they remarked, were not sufficiently numerous in that part of the country to effect such havoc, even in the depth of winter; but, said they, it is impossible at this early stage of the season that it could be them; and they were right, for it would be difficult to point out one regiment that did not take something in the shape of tithe from the sheepholders.

One night in November, 1811, three of the "boys" walked out of their quarters with nothing at all—but their bayonets; Mackguekin headed them. The sheep-fold they assailed was defended by five armed Portuguese; but what did the "boys" care for that? After nearly sending the unfortunate men to the other world, they very deliberately tied their arms and legs together to keep them aisy, as they afterwards said, and then performing the same office to three sheep, they left their owners to look after the remainder.

As may be supposed, this affair made a great noise; the Provost-Marshal was directed to search, with the utmost care, the quarters and premises of all the regiments; but the fellow instinctively, I believe, turned towards those of my corps, and here, I am sorry to confess, he found that which he wanted, namely, the three sheep, part of them in a camp-kettle on the fire,

and the remainder in an outhouse. This was enough. The three men were identified by the Portuguese, tried, flogged, and had to pay for the sheep, which (the worst of it!) they had not the pleasure of even tasting; but this example by no means put a stop to the evil. The sheep-folds were plundered, the shepherds pummelled, and our fellows flogged without mercy. General Picton at length issued orders, directing the rolls of the regiment to be called over by an officer of each company at different periods during the night; and by this measure the evil was remedied; but we did not get credit for even this. That pleasantest of all pleasant fellows, Bob Hardyman, of the 45th, used to say, in jest, that instead of the officers going round the quarters, we entrusted the duty to a serjeant; and, according to Bob's account, the manner of his performing the duty was as follows:—

Arrived at the door, he gave a gentle tap, when voices from within, called out, "Who's there?"

Ser. "It's me, boys!"

Sol. "And who are you?"

Ser. "Why then blur 'an ouns, boys, don't yees know my voice?"

Sol. "Och! and to be sure we do now."

Ser. "Well, boys, yees know what I'me come about."

Sol. "Sure we do, serjeant."

Ser. "Well, boys, are yees all within?"

Sol. "Within; is it! to be sure we are; why, where else would we be?"

Ser "That's right, boys! but boys, take care, are yees all in bed?"

Sol. "In bed! sure we are, and all asleep too!!"

Ser. "Och! that's right, honies, it's myself that's proud to find yees grown so regular!"

And having thus performed his duty, he wished them good night. But poor Bob Hardyman was one of those sort of fellows that could say a thing, (and

make you laugh at it too, although at your own expense,) that if another person attempted, he would get his teeth knocked down his throat; he verified a saying in his own county, (Galway,) that one man in that country might steal a horse with impunity, when another darn't look over the hedge where he was grazing.

At Aldea-de-Ponte, the head-quarters of our division, all was quiet; and although our allowance of provisions was scanty, and our supply of money scarcely sufficient to procure us salt and rice for our soup, the division, nevertheless, was in high order; we had a good deal of drill, and regular examination's of the men's kits, a very necessary precaution with all regiments and with my corps as well as another. At an inspection of this kind by General Mackinnon, he found fault,—and deservedly so, I must confess—with the scanty manner in which some of the men of my company were supplied. The General was too much the gentleman to row, or call names, but it was clear from his manner that he was far from satisfied with the wardrobe displayed by these fellows; indeed, if he was, it would have been easy to please him! At last coming to a "boy" of the name of Darby Rooney, whose knapsack was what a Frenchman would term *vide*, or—to speak more intelligibly, one that contained nothing whatever but his watch-coat, a piece of pipe-clay, and button-brush! he seemed thunder-struck, as well he might, for I believe "he ne'er had looked upon its like before!"

With more asperity of manner than I ever observed him to make use of, he asked "Darby" to whose squad he belonged. Darby Rooney understood about as much English as enabled him to get over a parade tolerably, but a conversation such as the General was about to hold with him was beyond his capacity, and he began to feel a little confused at the prospect of a *tête-à-tête* with his General; "Squidha—squodha

—cad-dershe-vourneen?"* said he, turning to the orderly-serjeant, Pat Gafney, who did not himself speak the English language quite as correctly as Lindley Murray, "Whist, ye Bostoon,"† said Gafney, "and dont make a baste of yourself before the General." "Why," said General Mackinnon, "I believe he don't understand me." "No, sir," replied Gafney, "he don't know what your honour manes."

The General passed on, taking it for granted that the man had never heard of a squad, and making some gentlemanlike observations on the utility of such partitions of a company, expressed himself satisfied with the fine appearance of the regiment, and our inspection ended with credit to us, this solitary instance excepted. This was, however, enough. Ill-nature and scandal seldom lack arguments. They are ever ready to take a hint, and it is unnecessary that a report should be as true as the gospel to form a foundation for their belief of it. An hour had not elapsed when the entire division were made acquainted (through some of our friends!) with the story. Groups of officers might be seen together (God forgive them!) laughing at our expense. "Well!" cried one, "did you hear what happened with the Connaughts to-day?" —"No," replied a second, "but I'll bet twenty dollars I guess; another sheep or goat found in their quarters?" "No. But when General Mackinnon inspected them just now, there was not one man in the regiment who knew what a squad was!" "I would have sworn it," replied a third. An old crone of a major, now joined the group, and shaking his head, said, "Ah! they are a sad set!" Poor idiot! The 88th was a more really *efficient* regiment than almost any *two* corps in the third division.

But to return to the war. The partial successes

* What does he say, Honey? † Hold your tongue, you booby.

which the Guerillas obtained over detached bodies, and in some instances over regular columns of the enemy, gave them great confidence in themselves, and they carried their effrontery so far, that in many instances they captured the oxen belonging to the garrison of Rodrigo close to the glacis of that fortress. On the 15th of October, Don Julian Sanchez, who had waited the night before in ambush near Ciudad-Rodrigo, surprised General Reynaud, the governor, when he was coming out for a ride, and took him prisoner; while the brave and enterprising Empecinado attacked the garrison of Calatayad, and took four hundred prisoners; and Espos y Mina destroyed, in the neighbourhood of Ayorbe, a French detachment of eleven hundred men.

Although all hostile movements in the neighbourhood of Ciudad-Rodrigo had ceased, and both British and French in its vicinity were in a state of comparative repose, in the other parts of the Peninsula much activity prevailed. On the first of October, the second division of our army, commanded by General Hill, resumed its position on the left of the Tagus, with the view of covering the province of Alentejo against any attempts that might be made to disturb its tranquility by the garrison of Badajoz. The fifth French corps, under the command of General Girard, was posted at Estramadura; while General Drouet, with the ninth corps, kept up a line of communication between Girard's corps and Badajoz.

The Spanish General, Castanos, was busily employed in the organization of a considerable corps between the Guadiana and the Tagus; these demonstrations caused some uneasiness to Marshal Soult, who accordingly gave directions to General Girard to make a movement upon Merida, and to use every means in his power to disperse this force of Spaniards before it should be in a situation to act on the offensive.

General Girard followed those orders with success, and forced the Spanish General into Portugal; but General Hill was by no means an idle spectator of the movement made by the French General, and he anxiously watched for an opportunity to punish him for his apparent disregard of the presence of a British division. General Hill was at Portalegre, distant but a few marches from the French, nevertheless they continued to pillage the country with as much security as if there was no enemy within reach of them. After several marches, made with the greatest precaution, on the 27th of October, the English General established himself in the village of Alcascar, close to the town of Arroyo-de-Molinos, the head-quarters of General Girard!

At two o'clock on the morning of the 28th, the British division was in motion, and under cover of a thick fog attacked the French troops as they were about to *debouche* from their position; nothing could exceed their consternation at this unexpected attack: their column made but a feeble resistance, and out of three thousand men of which the division consisted, it lost upwards of two thousand, together with the General of Brigade, Bron, and Colonel the Duke of Aremberg.

CHAPTER XIV.

Officers and serjeants—Fairfield and his bad habit—Regimental mechanism—Impolitic familiarity—Third division at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo—Lieutenant D'Arcy and Ody Brophy—The Irish pilot.

THE joke about Darby Rooney's wardrobe, and the conversation that took place between him and General Mackinnon, was circulated throughout the army, and I believe there was not one regiment unacquainted with the circumstance; indeed, so general was its circulation, that it reached the head-quarters of Lord Wellington himself, and if report spoke truly (which it don't always do,) it caused his lordship to laugh heartily.

I have myself,—before, and since I wrote the story,—often been asked if it was really a fact that we had no squads in the companies of my regiment, and I have invariably answered that we had not, and that every iota told by Bob Hardyman was true, for I think Bob's description of the Connaught Rangers altogether too rich to be contradicted or even altered; but were I myself to give a "full and true account" of the "boys," I would set them down as a parcel of lads that took the world easy, or, as they them-

selves would say—aisy, with a proper share of that nonchalance which is only to be acquired on service—real service; but I cannot bring myself to think them, as many did, a parcel of devils, neither will I by any manner of means try to pass them off for so many saints! but the fact is, (and I have before said so,) that there was not one regiment in the Peninsular army more severely—perhaps so severely—drilled as mine was; but I also say, without the slightest fear of contradiction, that the officers never tormented themselves or their men with too much fuss. We approached their quarters as seldom as we possibly could—I mean as seldom as was necessary—and thereby kept up that distance between officers and privates, so essential to discipline; this we considered the proper line of conduct to chalk out, and we ever acted up to it. We were amused to see some regiments whose commanding officers obliged every subaltern to parade his men at bed-time in their blankets! Why, they looked like so many hobgoblins! but if such an observance were necessary as far as concerned the soldiers, surely a serjeant ought to be able to do this much.

The serjeants in the British army are better paid than the subalterns of any other European power, and if they are incapable of performing the regimental drudgery, it comes to this—that they either receive too much pay, or do too little duty. Upon this conviction we ever acted; we made our serjeants do the duty usually performed by officers in other regiments, and we found our account in it. Our argument was one that must be, I should conceive, obvious to the meanest capacity,—it was this: if the serjeants were proper attentive persons, as they should be from the rate of their pay, they were just as capable as commissioned officers to fulfil such duties as I have mentioned; if, on the contrary, they were idle inefficient

fellows, the best method to make them acquainted with their duty was by accustoming them to perform it. Practice, they say, makes perfect, and sure enough we kept our fellows to it. There may be some few who would combat this line of reasoning, but my reply to those gentlemen is, that a certain emulation ought to exist amongst the non-commissioned officers in every battalion; otherwise, how will that *esprit du corps* so essential to the well-being of a crack regiment, be kept up? It cannot be done.

Old General Hamilton used to say, that a soldier without pride was not worth his salt—and old General Hamilton was right; however, should there be persons sceptical enough to combat my position, backed as I think it is by so good an authority, "come on and fight—if I have no fence, there is the better chance of victory." But what is any regiment the better for too much quackery? Decidedly not one whit. It is the cant to say that it is not only the better for it, but that it is an ingredient essential to its very existence. I know this; but have I found it so? Certainly not. Does it make a regiment more healthy, march better, fight better, or more staunch to its colours? I have never found that it did. Does it make the men more content with their lot, or the officers with theirs? Or—and here is a point of some consideration—does it raise the non-commissioned officers in the estimation of the soldiers, or in their estimation of themselves? I think not, and there's the rub; for I should be sorry to have it supposed that my anxiety to make the minor duties of a battalion be performed by serjeants, was meant as a cloak for the subalterns to shy their work. Heaven knows, and so do my brother subs—at least such of them as are in the land of the living—that such is not my motive; but there are some curmudgeons at the head of regiments who are never at rest unless they

have their unfortunate subs thrusting their noses into every nook, no matter how filthy.

If a selection of good serjeants and corporals be made by the officer at the head of a regiment, and if that officer will only allow those individuals to do their duty, there is not the least doubt but that they will do it—I peril myself upon the assertion, and I bet a sovereign that the "Guards" agree with me.

I well remember some of those regiments, circumstanced as I have described, during the Peninsular War; those poor fellows were much to be pitied, for they were not only obliged to fag, but to dress also, with as much scrupulous exactness as the time and place would admit of. What folly! but was Lord Wellington to blame for this? Unquestionably not. He never troubled his head about such trifles, and had the commanding officers of corps followed the example set them (of not paying too much respect to minutiæ) by the Commander-in-chief, the situation of the junior officers in the army would have been far different from what it was.

Another custom prevailed in many regiments, which was attempted to be got up in mine, but we crushed it in its infancy; it was the sending a surgeon or his assistant to ascertain the state of an officer's health, should he think himself not well enough to attend an early drill.

We had in my old corps, amongst other "charac ters," one that, at the period I am writing about, was well known in the army to be as jovial a fellow as ever put his foot under a mess-table; his name was Fairfield; and though there were few who could sing as good a song, there was not in the whole British army a worse duty officer; indeed, it was next to impossible to catch hold of him for any duty whatever, and so well known was his dislike to all military etiquette, that the officer next to him on the roaster,

the moment Fairfield's name appeared for guard-mounting or court-martial, considered himself as the person meant, and he was right nine times out of ten. The frequent absence of Fairfield from drill, at a time too when the regiment was in expectation of being inspected by the general of division, obliged the officer commanding to send the surgeon to ascertain the nature of his malady, which from its long continuance (on occasions of duty!) strongly savoured of a chronic complaint. The doctor found the invalid traversing his chamber rather lightly clad for an indisposed person; he was singing one of Moore's melodies, and accompanying himself with his violin, which instrument he touched with great taste. The doctor told him the nature of his visit, and offered to feel his pulse, but Fairfield turned from him, repeating the lines of Shakspeare, "Canst thou minister," &c. &c. "Well," replied the surgeon, "I am sorry for it, but I cannot avoid reporting you fit for duty." "I'm sorry you cannot," rejoined Fairfield; "but my complaint is best known to myself! and I feel that were I to rise as early as is necessary, I hould be lost to the service in a month." "Why," said the doctor, "Major Thompson says you have been lost to it ever since he first knew you, and that is now something about six years;" and he took his leave for the purpose of making his report.

The Major's orderly was soon at Fairfield's quarters, with a message to say that his presence was required by his commanding officer. Fairfield was immediately in attendance. "Mr. Fairfield," said the Major, "your constant habit of being absent from early drill has obliged me to send the surgeon to ascertain the state of your health, and he reports that you are perfectly well, and I must say that your appearance is anything but that of an invalid—how is this?" "Don't mind him, sir," replied Fairfield;

"I am, thank God! very well, *now*, but when the bugle sounded this morning at four o'clock, a cold shivering came over me—I think it was a touch of ague! and besides, Doctor Gregg is too short a time in the Connaught Rangers to know my *habit*." "Is he?" rejoined the old Major, "he must be d——d stupid then; but that is a charge you surely can't make against me; I have been now about nineteen years in the regiment, during six of which I have had the pleasure of knowing you, and you will allow me to tell you, that I am not only well acquainted with 'your habit,' but to request you will, from this moment, *change it*,"—and with this gentle rebuke he good humouredly dismissed him. He was an excellent duty officer ever after.

There are many who will, perhaps, say that the commanding officer should have been more rigid, and at the very least have placed the offender under arrest, but this is a false notion. An officer at the head of a regiment is often obliged—or at least ought often—to shut his eyes against little irregularities, and a gentle rebuke is sometimes better than a harsher mode of proceeding; and not only the interior economy, but the interior harmony of a corps is better insured by this means. If the officers are happy, the soldiers are sure to be so; and if officers and privates are content with their lot, all must go right.

A soldier of the 88th (while that corps was stationed in Lower Canada, in 1814,) was once asked by a Yankee, "Why it was that the men of his corps never deserted when so fine an opportunity was afforded them to do so?" "Why thin," replied Paddy, "iv you want to know the raison that we don't desart, I'll tell it to you nately. We have no complaint to make against our officers, and we can't be more happy than we are. Our officers and we give and take with each other, and there's the ins and

outs of it." And there *is* the "ins" and "outs" of it: this is the grand secret.

A regiment is a piece of mechanism, and requires as much care as any other machine, whose parts are obliged to act in unison to keep it going as it ought. If a screw or two be loose, a skilful hand will easily right them without injuring the machine; but if it falls into the hands of a self-sufficient, ignorant bungler, it is sure to be injured, if not destroyed altogether; and as certain as the daylight, if it is ever placed in a situation where it must, from necessity, be allowed to act for itself—where the main spring cannot control the lesser ones, much less the great body of the machine—it will be worse than useless—worse than a log—not only in the way, but not to be depended upon!

It must not, however, be supposed, that these observations are meant to favour a too little regard to that system of discipline which is so essential to be observed in the army, and without which any army—but particularly a British one—would be inefficient; they are written by one who, although he never did, or, in all human probability, ever will, attain a higher rank than these "Reminiscences" avow him to hold, has had, nevertheless, some experience; and if any thing he writes now, or may write hereafter, conduces to the amusement—he is not vain enough to say information—of his military readers, he will be more than repaid for his trouble.

Extremes should be avoided, and too much familiarity is as bad as too much severity. I once heard of a commanding officer of a first-rate regiment, who was in the habit of allowing the junior officers of his corps to make too free with him; he at length found it necessary to send his adjutant to inquire the reason why a young ensign, who was in the habit of absenting himself from parade, did so on one of those days which was allotted as a garrison parade? The adjutant in-

formed the ensign, that the colonel awaited his reply. "Shall I say you are unwell?" demanded he. "Oh! no," replied the ensign, "I'll settle the matter with the commanding officer myself." The hour of dinner approached, yet no communication was received from the ensign. Passing from his quarters to the mess-room, the commanding officer met the ensign, and was about to accost him, when the latter turned his head aside, and declined recognising his colonel, who, upon arriving at the mess-room, was so dejected as to attract the notice of all the officers. Upon being asked why he was so out of spirits, the colonel, "good easy man," told a "round unvarnished tale," and in conclusion, added, "I thought nothing of his not answering my message! but I cannot express how much I am hurt at the idea of his cutting me as he did when I wished to speak with him!" This was *un peu trop fort;* and had the regiment in question been much longer under the command of the good-natured personage I have described, there is little doubt but that it would have become rather relaxed in its discipline.

The different movements amongst the contending armies in the end of the 1811, caused it to be presumed that the campaign the following year would open with much spirit; and so it did, although earlier than was anticipated. On the 27th of December, the division of General Hill left its cantonments in the vicinity of Portalegre, in the expectation of surprising the French at Merida. The advanced guard of the British fell in with a party of French marauders, who, having collected, formed a square, and owing to the nature of the ground, (which was uneven,) and to the rapidity of their march, succeeded in re-entering Merida before they could be attacked by the English infantry. The French General did not await the arrival of General Hill, but retreated upon Lerena, at which place he was sustained by the fifth corps, under the command of the Count D'Erlon.

General Hill reached Almandralejo on the 2nd of January, 1812, and made a *reconnoissance* as far as Los Santos. A brilliant affair of cavalry took place in the environs of this town, and Lieutenant-Colonel Abercromby, who commanded our detachment, completely overthrew the French horse, although they were much superior in numbers. This advantage made Marshal Soult apprehensive of a more serious attack, and he concentrated the forces of Victor and Laval; but General Hill, satisfied with having created an alarm in the French army of the south, retired to his former quarters on the frontiers of Portugal.

The advance of General Hill was but a feint to deceive the enemy; it was made with the view of making Marshal Marmont believe that our forces on the left of the Tagus were much more numerous than they really were; thereby inducing him not to harbour any apprehensions respecting Ciudad-Rodrigo, the possession of which, Lord Wellington had resolved on. Marmont's security was besides increased by the facility with which the blockade of that fortress had been raised three months before, through the bare junction of four divisions with the army of the Count Dorsenne; a manœuvre which might be repeated at any time with an equal probability of success. He not only quartered his army in very extensive cantonments, but also detached General Montbrun, with three divisions, to co-operate with Marshal Suchet in the kingdom of Valencia.

Intimately acquainted with these details, Lord Wellington redoubled his efforts in the arrangement of all that was necessary to carry on the siege of Ciudad-Rodrigo with vigour. The third division, which was one of those destined to take a part in the attack, broke up from its cantonments on the morning of the 4th of January, 1812. Carpio, Espeja, and Pastores, were occupied by our troops, and the greatest activity prevailed throughout every department, but more espe-

cially in that of the engineers. All the cars in the country were put into requisition for the purpose of conveying fascines, gabions, and the different materials necessary, to the Convent de la Carida, distant a league and half from Rodrigo: the guns were at Gallegos, and every thing was in that state of preparation which announced that a vigorous attack was about to be made in the depth of a severe winter, against a fortress that had withstood for twenty-five days all the efforts of Marshal Massena, in the summer of 1810, when it was only occupied by a weak garrison of Spaniards; yet, nevertheless, every one felt confident, and the soldiers burned with impatience to wipe away the blot of the former year in the unfortunate siege of San Christoval and Badajoz.

The attack of Ciudad-Rodrigo, although sudden in its developement, was, nevertheless, one of long contemplation; and the result, which was so rapid as to baffle all the calculations of the French Marshal, proved to the world that the British army were not only not inferior to the French in their engineer department, but that it excelled them in that arm as decidedly as it did in every other.

I have before mentioned that we had not an effective corps of engineers; I mean in point of numbers: to remedy this defect, a proportion of the most intelligent officers and soldiers of the infantry were selected during the autumn months, and placed under the direction of Colonel Fletcher, the chief engineer: they were soon taught how to make fascines and gabions, and what was of equal consequence—how to use them. They likewise learned the manner of working by sap, and by this means, that branch of our army which was before the weakest, had now become very efficient.

The morning of the 4th of January was dreadfully inauspicious. The order for marching arrived at three o'clock, and we were under arms at five. The rain

fell in torrents, and the village of Aldea-de-Ponte, which the brigade of General Mackinnon occupied, was a sea of filth; the snow on the surrounding hills drifted down with the flood, and nearly choked up the roads, and the appearance of the morning was any thing but a favourable omen for us who had a march of nine leagues to make ere we reached the town of Robleada, on the river Agueda, which was destined to be our resting-place for the night.

At half-past six the brigade was in motion, and I scarcely remember a more disagreeable day; the rain which had fallen in the morning was succeeded by snow and sleet, and some soldiers, who sunk from cold and fatigue, fell down exhausted, soon became insensible, and perished; yet, strange to say, an Irish-woman of my regiment was delivered of a child upon the road, and continued the march with her infant in her arms.

Notwithstanding the severity of the day, it was impossible to avoid occasionally smiling at the *outré* appearance of some of the officers. The total disregard which the Commander-in-chief paid to uniformity of dress, is well known, and there were many on this day who were obliged to acknowledge that they showed more taste than judgment in their selection. Captain Adair, of my corps, nearly fell a victim to the choice he had made, on this our first day of opening the campaign of 1812. He wore a pair of boots that fitted him with a degree of exactness that would not disgrace a "Hoby;" the heels were high, and the toes sharply pointed; his pantaloons were of blue web; his frock-coat and waistcoat were tastefully and fashionably chosen, the former light blue richly frogged with lace, the latter of green velvet with large silver Spanish buttons, but he forgot the most essential part of all —and that was his boat cloak. For the first ten or twelve miles he rode, but the cold was so intense that

he was obliged to dismount, and unquestionably his dress was but ill calculated for walking. The rain with which his pantaloons were saturated, was by this time nearly frozen (for the day had begun to change,) and he became so dreadfully chafed that he was necessitated to give up the march, and we left him at a village half way from Robleada, resembling more one of those which composed "the army of martyrs," than that commanded by Lord Wellington. I myself was nearly in as bad a state, but being a few years younger, and more serviceably clad, I made an effort to get on.

We had by this time (eight o'clock at night proceeded a considerable way in the dark, and, as may be supposed, it was a difficult matter to keep the men together as compactly as could be wished. Whenever an opportunity occurred, a jaded soldier or two of my regiment used to look in on our Spanish friends, and if they found them at supper, they could not bring themselves to refuse an offer to "take share of what was going," and, to say the truth, this was no more than might be expected from a set of fellows who belonged to a country so proverbial for its hospitality to strangers as theirs (Ireland) was! besides this, the men of the Connaught Rangers had a way of making themselves "at home" that was peculiar to them, and for which—whatever else might be denied them!—they got full credit. Bob Hardyman used to say, "they had a *taking way* with them."

Passing a hamlet a short distance from Robleda, we saw a number of Spaniards, women as well as men, outside the door of a good-looking house; much altercation was apparently taking place, at length a soldier (named Ody Brophy,) rushed out with half a flitch of bacon under his arm; a scuffle ensued, and Lieutenant D'Arcy, to whose company the soldier belonged, ran up to inquire the cause of the outcry, but it was soon too manifest to be mis-

understood; the war-whoop was raised against our man, who, on his part, as stoutly defended himself, not by words alone but by blows, which had nearly silenced his opponents, when he was seized by my friend D'Arcy. Piccaroon, Ladrone, and other approbrious epithets were poured with much volubility against him, but he, with the greatest *sang froid*, turned to his officer and said, "Be aisy now, and don't be vexing yourself with them, or the likes of them. Wasn't it for you I was making a bargain? and didn't I offer the value of it? Don't I see the way you're lost with the hunger, and the divil a bit iv rations you'll get ate to-night. Och! you cratur, iv your poor mother—that's dead! was to see you after such a condition, it's she that id be leev'd iv herself for letting you away from her at all-at-all." —"Well," said D'Arcy, (softened no doubt, and who would not at such a speech?) "what did you offer for it?"—"What did I offer for it, is it? Fait, then, I offered enough, but they made such a noise that I don't think they heard me, for, upon my sowl, I hardly heard myself with the uproar they made; and sure I told them iv I hadn't money enough to pay for it (and it was true for me I had'nt, unless I got it dog cheap!) you had; but they don't like a bone in my skin, or in yours either, and that is the raison they are afther offinding me afther such a manner. And didn't one of the women get my left thumb into her mouth, and grunch it like a bit of mate? Look at it," said he, in conclusion, at the same time thrusting his bleeding hand nearly into D'Arcy's face, "fait and iv your honour hadn't come up, it's my belief she would have bit it clane off at the knuckle." This speech, delivered with a rapidity and force that was sufficient to overwhelm the most practised rhetorician, carried away every thing along with it, like chaff before a whirlwind, and D'Arcy made all matters smooth by paying the price demanded (two dollars;) and the piece of bacon

was carried away by Ody, who was a townsman of D'Arcy's, and who repeatedly assured him "he would do more than that to sarve him."

It was impossible to avoid paying a tribute of praise to Ody Brophy for the tact with which he avoided the storm with which he was threatened; and upon this occasion he proved himself as good a pilot as ever guided a vessel, and to the full equal to one I once heard of in the harbour of Cork. A captain of a man-of-war, newly appointed to a ship on the Irish station, took the precaution, "in beating out" of harbour, to apprise the pilot that he was totally unacquainted with the coast, and therefore he must rely on the pilot's local knowledge for the safety of his ship.

"You are perfectly sure, pilot," said the captain, "you are well acquainted with the coast?"

"Do I know my own name, sir."

"Well, mind, I warn you not to approach too near the shore."

"Now make yourself aisy, sir, in troth you may go to bed iv you plaise."

"Then shall we stand on?"

"Why,—what else would we do?"

"Yes, but there may be hidden dangers, which you know nothing about."

"Dangers? I'd like to see the dangers dare hide themselves from Mich,—sure, don't I tell you I know every rock on the coast," (here the ship strikes), "*and that's one of 'em.*"

CHAPTER XV.

Spanish village accommodations—Progress of the siege—Picton's address to the Connaught Rangers in front of the breach—Lieutenant William Mackie and the forlorn-hope.

The brigade reached Robleada at nine o'clock at night, and our quarters there, which at any time would have been considered good, appeared to us, after our wretched billets at Aldea-de-Ponte, and the fatigue of a harassing march, sumptuous. The villages in Spain, like those of France, are well supplied with beds, and the house allotted to me, D'Arcy, and Captain Peshall, was far from deficient in those essentials. A loud knocking at the door of the cottage announced the arrival of Peshall, who, like some others, had been "thrown out" on the march, and who sought for his billet in the best manner he could. He was a man who might boast of as well-stocked a canteen as any other captain in the army; and upon this occasion it made a proud display. The fire-place was abundantly supplied with wood, and at each side of the chimney there was a profusion of that kind of furniture which I ever considered as indispensable to complete the garniture of a well-regulated cuisine, no matter whether in a cottage, or château—I mean hams, sausages, and flitches of well-cured bacon.

While I contemplated all the luxuries with which I was surrounded, I felt exceedingly happy, and I am inclined to think that the evening of the 4th of January 1812 was, if not one of the pleasantest of my life, unquestionably one of the most rational I ever passed. Our baggage had by this time arrived, and having got on dry clothes, we began to attack the contents of Peshall's canteen, which was ever at the service of his friends; it contained, among other good things, a Lamego ham, and a cold roast leg of mountain mutton, "morsels which may take rank, notwithstanding their Spartan plainness, with the most disguised of foreign manufacture." It is scarcely necessary to add, that we did ample justice to the viands placed before us, and having taken a sufficient libation of brandy punch, in which the Spaniard joined us, we began to turn, not only our thoughts, but our eyes also towards our beds; but it was soon manifest, from divers demonstrations on the part of our hostess, that she intended putting D'Arcy, and me, on what is called in Ireland the "Shaugarawn," or, in plain English, that she had made up her mind to give one bed to Peshall, and that the other should be occupied by herself and her husband.

We arose early the following morning, the 5th, and the brigade reached the small village of Attalaya, distant three leagues from Rodrigo, a little before noon. That fortress was completely invested on the evening of the 7th, and dispositions were made to commence operations against it on the night following.

Ciudad Rodrigo stands upon an eminence, on the right bank of the river Agueda, and is difficult of access; it had been since its occupation by the French, much strengthened by the construction of a redoubt on the hill called St. Francisco; some old convents in the suburbs were also turned into defences, and these places no longer presented their original peaceful appearance, but were, in fact, very respectable out-works,

and tended much to our annoyance and loss at the commencement of the siege.

To be safe against a *coup-de-main*, Rodrigo would require a force of from five to six thousand troops, and its present garrison did not reckon anything like three thousand bayonets; it was therefore manifest that, notwithstanding the unfavourable time of the year, it must fall if not speedily succoured, yet it would seem that Marshal Marmont took no measures to make a diversion in its favour.

Strongly impressed with this state of the matter, Lord Wellington saw the advantage he would have over his opponent, by acting with as little delay as possible; his situation, which could not be better, would, by the nature of things, change by losing time, and he resolved to open the trenches on the night of the 8th, but it was necessary to carry the redoubt of St. Francisco in the first instance.

Protected by a strong escort, Lord Wellington carefully reconnoitred the town on the 8th; and shortly after dark, three hundred men of the light division, headed by Colonel Colborn of the 52nd, were formed for the attack of St. Francisco. They were followed by a working party, composed also of men of the light division. The storming party, led on by Colonel Colborn, advanced under cover of the night, and were not discovered until they had reached to within a few yards of the redoubt, and our troops rushed on with such impetuosity, that the out-work was carried, and the soldiers that defended it put to the sword, before the garrison of Rodrigo thought it in danger; and profiting by the panic with which the enemy were seized, Colonel Colborn caused the works of the redoubt to be razed, completed the first parallel, and rendered our future approaches secure.

The duty in the trenches was carried on by the first, third, fourth, and light divisions, each taking its sepa-

rate tour every twenty-four hours; we had no tents or huts of any description; and the ground was covered with snow, nevertheless the soldiers were cheerful, and everything went on well. The fortified convents in the suburbs were respectively carried, and each sortie made by the garrison was immediately repulsed; in some instances our men pursued them to the very *glacis*, and many a fine fellow, carried away by his enthusiasm, died at the muzzles of their cannon.

Every exertion was made to forward the works, so fully were all impressed with its necessity; but notwithstanding the animated exertions of the engineers, and the ready co-operation of the infantry, their progress was at times unavoidably slower than was anticipated. In some instances the soil was so unfavourable, it was next to an impossibility to make head against it; instead of clay or gravel, we frequently met with a vein of rock, and invariably when this occurred, our losses were severe, for the pick-axes coming in contact with the stone, caused a fire to issue that plainly told the enemy where we were, and, as a matter of course, they redoubled their efforts on these points; nevertheless, on the 14th, in the afternoon, we were enabled to open our fire from twenty-two pieces of cannon superior to those which armed our batteries at Badajoz the year before, inasmuch as the former guns were of brass, while those which we now used were of metal. On this night we established the second parallel, distant only one hundred and fifty yards from the body of the place.

On the 15th the second parallel was in a forward state, and the approach by sap to the glacis was considerably advanced; the effect also of our fire was such as made us perceive a material alteration in the enemy's mode of replying to it; and it was apparent, that although but seven days before the place, our labours were soon likely to be brought to a termination. The cannonade of the enemy, however, if not as great as

at first, was more effective, and our casualties more numerous, and their guns and mortars were directed with a scientific precision that did credit to the men who served them. On the 18th, a battery of seven thirty-two pounders opened its fire, and from this height the walls of the Fausse Braye were distinguishable, while the guns in the first parallel overpowered the several bastions against which they were directed; indeed, every hour proved the visible superiority of our fire over that of the enemy, which at times seemed to be altogether extinguished, and whenever it shone forth with anything like brilliancy, it was but momentary, and might be well likened to some spark of combustible matter, issuing from the interior of a nearly consumed ruin. The battery which opened on the 15th had almost effected a breach opposite to the suburb of St. Francisco, and it was manifest that the one which assailed the Fausse Braye, although later in its construction, was to the full as effective as its companion. Wherever danger was greatest, there were our engineers, and it was painful to see their devotedness; on horseback or on foot, under cover or exposed to fire, was to them the same, and their example was followed by the soldiers with an enthusiasm unequalled; in short, it was plain that a few hours would suffice to decide the fate of Ciudad Rodrigo. At this period (the 18th), the fourth division occupied and performed the duty in the trenches.

Early on the morning of the 19th, the third division (although not for duty that day,) received orders to march to the Convent de la Carida,* and as Lord

* "On the 19th of January the light division was ordered to assault out of its turn. At first it was reported they were to take both breaches, but as the third division were also throwing up earth, their General remonstrated."—(*Sketch of the Storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, by an Officer engaged*).

Answer by the Author.—This is a mistake. The third division, like the light, was ordered to assault "out of its turn;" it

Wellington was not in the habit of giving us unnecessary marches, we concluded that he intended us the honour of forming one of the corps destined to carry the place. On our march we perceived our old friends and companions, the light division, debouching from their cantonments, and the joy expressed by our men when they saw them, is not to be described: we were long acquainted, and like horses accustomed to the same harness, we pulled well together. At two o'clock in the afternoon we left La Carida, and passing to the rear of the first parallel, formed in column about two gun-shots distant from the main breach. The fourth division still occupied the works, and it was the general opinion that ours (the third) were to be in reserve. The number of Spaniards, Portuguese, and soldiers' wives in the character of suttlers, was immense, and the neighbourhood, which but a few days before was only an empty plain, now presented the appearance of a vast camp. Wretches of the poorest description hovered round us, in hopes of getting a morsel of food, or of plundering some dead or wounded soldier: their cadaverous countenances expressed a living picture of the greatest want; and it required all our precaution to prevent these miscreants from robbing us the instant we turned our backs from our scanty store of baggage or provisions.

Our bivouack, as may be supposed, presented an animated appearance: groups of soldiers cooking in one place; in another, some dozens collected together, listening to accounts brought from the works by some of their companions whom curiosity had led thither; others relating their past battles to any of the young

did not arrive before Rodrigo until the afternoon of the 19th, neither did it throw up earth on that day, nor was any remonstrance made—indeed, it could not—on the part of its General on that score.

soldiers who had not as yet come hand to hand with a Frenchman; others dancing and singing; officers' servants preparing dinner for their masters, and officers themselves, dressed in whatever way best suited their taste or convenience, mixed with the men, without any distinguishing mark of uniform to denote their rank; the only thing uniform to be discovered amongst a group of between four and five thousand, was good conduct and confidence in themselves and their general.

It was now five o'clock in the afternoon, and darkness was approaching fast, yet no order had arrived intimating that we were to take a part in the contest about to be decided; we were in this state of suspense, when our attention was attracted by the sound of music: we all stood up, and pressed forward to a ridge, a little in our front, and which separated us from the cause of our movement, but it would be impossible for me to convey an adequate idea of our feelings, when we beheld the 43rd Regiment, preceded by their band, going to storm the left breach; they were in the highest spirits, but without the slightest appearance of levity in their demeanour,—on the contrary, there was a cast of determined severity thrown over their countenances, that expressed in legible characters that they knew the sort of service they were about to perform, and had made up their minds to the issue. They had no knapsacks—their firelocks were slung over their shoulders—their shirt collars were open, and there was an indescribable *something* about them that at one and the same moment impressed the lookers-on with admiration and awe. In passing us, each officer and soldier stepped out of the ranks for an instant, as he recognized a friend, to press his hand; many for the last time: yet, notwithstanding this animating scene, there was no shouting or huzzaing, no boisterous bra-

vadoing, no unbecoming language; in short, every one seemed to be impressed with the seriousness of the affair entrusted to his charge, and any interchange of words was to this effect: "Well, lads, mind what you're about to-night;" or, "We'll meet in the town by and by;" and other little familiar phrases, all expressive of confidence. The regiment at length passed us, and we stood gazing after it as long as the rear platoon continued in sight: the music grew fainter every moment, until at last it died away altogether; they had no drums, and there was a melting sweetness in the sounds that touched the heart.

The first syllable uttered after this scene was, "And are we to be left behind?" The interrogatory was scarcely put when the word "Stand to your arms," answered it; the order was promptly obeyed, and a breathless silence prevailed, when our commanding officer, in a few words, announced to us that Lord Wellington had directed our division to carry the grand breach. The soldiers listened to the communication with silent earnestness, and immediately began to disencumber themselves of their knapsacks, which were placed in order by companies, and a guard set over them; each man then began to arrange himself for the combat in such manner as his fancy or the moment would admit of,—some by lowering their cartridge-boxes, others by turning theirs to the front, in order that they might the more conveniently make use of them; others unclasping their stocks or opening their shirt collars, and others oiling their bayonets; and more taking leave of their wives and children. This last was an affecting sight, but not so much so as might be expected, because the women, from long habit, were accustomed to scenes of danger, and the order for their husbands to march against the enemy was in their eyes tantamount to a victory, and as the soldier seldom returned without plunder

of some sort, the painful suspense which his absence caused was made up by the gaiety which his return was certain to be productive of; or, if unfortunately he happened to fall, his place was sure to be supplied by some one of the company to which he belonged, so that the women of our army had little cause of alarm on this head. The worst that could happen to them was the chance of being in a state of widowhood for a week.

It was by this time half-past six o'clock, the evening was piercingly cold, and the frost was crisp on the grass; there was a keenness in the air that braced our nerves at least as high as *concert pitch*. We stood quietly to our arms, and told our companies off by files, sections, and sub-divisions; the serjeants called over the rolls, not a man was absent.

It appears it was the wish of General Mackinnon to confer a mark of distinction upon the 88th Regiment, and as it was one of the last acts of his life, I shall mention it. He sent for Major Thompson, who commanded the battalion, and told him it was his wish to have the forlorn hope of the grand breach led on by a subaltern of the 88th Regiment, adding at the same time, that, in the event of his surviving, he should be recommended for a company. The Major acknowledged this mark of the General's favour, and left him folding up some letters he had been writing to his friends in England—this was about twenty minutes before the attack of the breaches. Major Thompson, having called his officers together, briefly told them the wishes of their General; he was about to proceed, when Lieutenant William Mackie (*then senior Lieutenant*) immediately stepped forward, and dropping his sword said, "Major Thompson, I am ready for that service."* For once in his life poor old

* Appendix, No. 3.

Thompson was affected; Mackie was his own townsman, they had fought together for many years, and when he took hold of his hand and pronounced the words, "God bless you, my boy," his eye filled, his lip quivered, and there was a faltering in his voice which was evidently perceptible to himself, for he instantly resumed his former composure, drew himself up, and gave the word, "Gentlemen, fall in," and at this moment Generals Picton and Mackinnon, accompanied by their respective staff, made their appearance amongst us.

Long harangues are not necessary to British soldiers, and on this occasion but few words were made use of. Picton said something animating to the different regiments as he passed them, and those of my readers who recollect his deliberate and strong utterance will say with me, that his mode of speaking was indeed very impressive. The address to each was nearly the same, but that delivered by him to the 88th was so characteristic of the General, and so applicable to the men he spoke to, that I shall give it, word for word; it was this—

"Rangers of Connaught! it is not my intention to expend any powder this evening. We'll do this business with the could iron."

I before said the soldiers were silent—so they were, but the man who could be silent after such an address, made in such a way, and in such a place, had better have stayed at home. It may be asked what did they do? Why, what would they do, or would any one do but give the loudest hurrah he was able.

CHAPTER XVI.

Storm of Ciudad Rodrigo, gallant conduct of three soldiers of the 88th—Desperate struggle and capture of a gun—Combat between Lieutenant Faris and the French Grenadier—A Connaught Ranger transformed into a sweep—Anecdote of Captain Robert Hardyman of the 45th—Death of General Mackinnon—Plunder of Ciudad Rodrigo—Excesses of the soldiers.

THE burst of enthusiasm caused by Picton's address to the Connaught Rangers had scarcely ceased, when the signal gun announced that the attack was to commence. Generals Picton and Mackinnon dismounted from their horses, and placing themselves at the head of the right brigade, the troops rapidly entered the trenches by sections right in front; the storming party under the command of Major Russell Manners, of the 74th, heading it, while the forlorn-hope, commanded by Lieutenant William Mackie, of the 88th, and composed of twenty volunteers from the Connaught Rangers, led the van, followed closely by the 45th, 88th, and 74th British, and the 9th, and 21st Portuguese; the 77th and 83rd British belonging to the left brigade, brought up the rear, and completed the dispositions.

While these arrangements were effecting opposite the grand breach, the 5th and 94th, belonging to the left brigade of the third division, were directed to

clear the ramparts and Fausse Braye wall, and the 2nd Regiment of Portuguese Caçadores, commanded by an Irish Colonel of the name of O'Toole, was to escalade the curtain to the left of the lesser breach, which was attacked by the light division under the command of General Robert Craufurd.

The 43rd Light Infantry, heading the light division, were followed by the 95th and 52nd British, and the 3rd and 7th Portuguese Caçadores; the storming party, led by Major G. Napier of the 52nd, and the forlorn-hope by Lieutenant Gurwood of the same regiment, preceded the entire. It wanted ten minutes to seven o'clock when these dispositions were completed —the moon occasionally, as the clouds which overcast it passed away, shed a faint ray of light upon the battlements of the fortress, and presented to our view the glittering of the enemy's bayonets as their soldiers stood arrayed upon the ramparts and breach awaiting our attack; yet, nevertheless, their batteries were silent, and might warrant the supposition to an unobservant spectator that the defence would be but feeble.

The two divisions, arrayed as I have described, got clear of the covert way at the same moment, and each advanced to the attack of their respective points with the utmost regularity. The obstacles which presented themselves to both were nearly the same, but every difficulty, no matter how great, merged into insignificance when placed in the scale of the prize about to be contested. The soldiers were full of ardour, but altogether devoid of that blustering and bravadoing which is truly unworthy of men at such a moment; and it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of the enthusiastic bravery which animated the troops. A cloud that had for some time before obscured the moon, which was at its full, disappeared altogether, and the countenances of the soldiers

were for the first time, since Picton addressed them, visible—they presented a material change. In place of that joyous animation which his fervid and impressive address called forth, a look of severity, bordering on ferocity, had taken its place; and although ferocity is by no means one of the characteristics of the British soldier, there was, most unquestionably, a savage expression in the faces of the men, that I had never before witnessed. Such is the difference between the storm of a breach and the fighting a pitched battle.

Once clear of the covert way, and fairly on the plain that separated it from the fortress, the enemy had a full view of all that was passing; their batteries, charged to the muzzle with case-shot, opened a murderous fire upon the columns as they advanced, but nothing could shake the intrepid bravery of the troops. The light division soon descended the ditch, and gained, although not without a serious struggle, the top of the narrow and difficult breach allotted to them;—their gallant General, Robert Craufurd, fell at the head of the 43rd, and his second in command, General Vandeleur, was severely wounded, but there were not wanting others to supply their place; yet these losses, trying as they were to the feelings of the soldiers, in no way damped their ardour, and the brave light division carried the left breach at the point of the bayonet. Once established upon the ramparts, they made all the dispositions necessary to ensure their own conquest, as also to render every assistance in their power to the third division in their attack. They cleared the rampart which separated the lesser from the grand breach, and relieved Picton's division from any anxiety it might have as to its safety on its left flank.

The right brigade, consisting of the 45th, 88th, and 74th, forming the van of the third division, upon

reaching the ditch, to its astonishment, found Major Ridge and Colonel Campbell at the head of the 5th and 94th, mounting the Fausse Braye wall; these two regiments, after having performed their task of silencing the fire of the French troops upon the ramparts, with a noble emulation resolved to precede their comrades in the attack of the grand breach—both parties greeted each other with a cheer, only to be understood by those who have been placed in a similar situation: yet the enemy were in no way daunted by the shout raised by our soldiers—they crowded the breach, and defended it with a bravery that would have made any but troops accustomed to conquer, waver. But the "fighting division" were not the men to be easily turned from their purpose; the breach was speedily mounted, yet, nevertheless, a serious affray took place ere it was gained. A considerable mass of infantry crowned its summit, while in the rear and at each side were stationed men, so placed that they could render every assistance to their comrades at the breach without any great risk to themselves; besides this, two guns of heavy calibre, separated from the breach by a ditch of considerable depth and width, enfiladed it, and as soon as the French infantry were forced from the summit, these guns opened their fire on our troops.

The head of the column had scarcely gained the top, when a discharge of grape cleared the ranks of the three leading battalions, and caused a momentary wavering; at the same instant a frightful explosion near the gun to the left of the breach, which shook the bastion to its foundation, completed the disorder. Mackinnon, at the head of his brigade, was blown into the air. His aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Beresford of the 88th, shared the same fate, and every man on the breach at the moment of the explosion perished. This was unavoidable, because those of the

advance being either killed or wounded, were necessarily flung back upon the troops that followed close upon their footsteps, and there was not a sufficient space for the men who were ready to sustain those placed *hors de combat*, to rally. For an instant all was confusion; the blaze of light caused by the explosion, resembled a huge meteor, and presented to our sight the havoc which the enemy's fire had caused in our ranks; while from afar, the astonished Spaniard viewed for an instant, with horror and dismay, the soldiers of the two nations grappling with each other on the top of the rugged breach which trembled beneath their feet, while the fire of the French artillery played upon our columns with irresistible fury, sweeping from the spot the living and the dead. Amongst the latter was Captain Robert Hardyman, and Lieutenant Pearce, of the 45th, and many more whose names I cannot recollect. Others were so stunned by the shock, or wounded by the stones which were hurled forth by the explosion, that they were insensible to their situation; of this number I was one, for being close to the magazine when it blew up, I was quite overpowered, and I owed my life to the Serjeant-Major of my regiment, Thorp, who saved me from being trampled to death by our soldiers in their advance, ere I could recover strength sufficient to move forward, or protect myself.

The French, animated by this accidental success, hastened once more to the breach which they had abandoned, but the leading regiments of Picton's division, which had been disorganized for the moment by the explosion, rallied, and soon regained its summit, when another discharge from the two flank guns swept away the foremost of those battalions.

There was at this time but one officer alive upon the breach, (Major Thomson, of the 74th, acting engineer;) he called out to those next to him to seize

the gun to the left, which had been so fatal to his companions—but this was a desperate service. The gun was completely cut off from the breach by a deep trench, and soldiers, encumbered with their firelocks, could not pass it in sufficient time to anticipate the next discharge—yet to deliberate was certain death. The French cannoneers, five in number, stood to, and served their gun with as much *sang froid* as if on a parade, and the light which their torches threw forth, showed to our men the peril they would have to encounter if they dared to attack a gun so defended—but this was of no avail. Men going to storm a breach, generally make up their minds that there is no great probability of their ever returning from it to tell their adventures to their friends; and whether they die at the bottom or top of it, or at the muzzle, or upon the breech of a cannon, is to them pretty nearly the same!

The first who reached the top after the last discharge, were three of the 88th. Serjeant Pat Brazill —the brave Brazill of the Grenadier company, who saved his captain's life at Busaco,*—called out to his two companions, Swan and Kelly, to unscrew their bayonets and follow him; the three men passed the trench in a moment, and engaged the French cannoneers hand to hand—a terrific but short combat was the consequence. Swan was the first, and was met by the two gunners on the right of the gun, but, no way daunted, he engaged them, and plunged his bayonet into the breast of one; he was about to repeat

* "Captain Dunne fought with his sabre, while Captain Dansey made use of a fire-lock and bayonet; he received three wounds, and Captain Dunne owed his life to a serjeant of his company named Brazill, who, seeing his officer in danger of being overpowered, scrambled to his assistance, and making a thrust of his halbert at the Frenchman, transfixed him against the rock on which he was standing."—*Reminiscences of a Subaltern.*

the blow upon the other, but before he could disentangle the weapon from his bleeding adversary, the second Frenchman closed upon him, and by a *coup de sabre*, severed his left arm from his body a little above the elbow; he fell from the shock, and was on the eve of being masacred, when Kelly, after having scrambled under the gun, rushed onward to succour his comrade. He bayonetted two Frenchmen on the spot; and at this instant Brazill came up—three of the five gunners lay lifeless, while Swan, resting against an ammunition chest, was bleeding to death. It was now equal numbers, two against two, but Brazill in his over anxiety to engage, was near losing his life at the onset; in making a lunge at the man next to him, his foot slipped upon the bloody platform, and he fell forward against his antagonist, but as both rolled under the gun, Brazill felt the socket of his bayonet strike hard against the buttons of the Frenchman's coat. The remaining gunner, in attempting to escape under the carriage from Kelly, was killed by some soldiers of the 5th, who just now reached the top of the breach, and seeing the serious dispute at the gun, pressed forward to the assistance of the three men of the Connaught Rangers.

While this was taking place on the left, the head of the column mounted the breach, and regardless of the cries of their wounded companions, whom they indiscriminately trampled to death, pressed forward in one irregular but heroic mass, and putting every man to death who opposed their progress, forced the enemy from the ramparts at the bayonet's point. Yet the garrison still rallied, and defended the several streets with the most unflinching bravery; nor was it until the musketry of the light division was heard in the direction of the Plaza Major, that they gave up the contest! but from this moment all regular resistance ceased, and they fled in disorder to the citadel. There

were, nevertheless, several minor combats in the streets, and in many instances the inhabitants fired from the windows, but whether their efforts were directed against us or the French, is a point that I do not feel myself competent to decide; be this as it may, many lives were lost on both sides by this circumstance, for the Spaniards firing without much attention to regularity, killed or wounded indiscriminately all who came within their range. This led many to suppose that the defence of the town would be prolonged, and that the houses, as at Buenos Ayres, would be defended; but although this idea had the good effect of keeping our men more compactly united than would otherwise have been the case, it was an erroneous opinion, as the French never attempted the defence of a single house.

During a contest of such a nature, kept up in the night, as may be supposed, much was of necessity left to the guidance of the subordinate officers, if not to the soldiers themselves. Each affray in the streets was conducted in the best manner the moment would admit of, and decided more by personal valour than discipline, and in some instances officers as well as privates had to combat with the imperial troops. In one of these encounters, Lieutenant George Faris of the 88th, by an accident so likely to occur in an affair of this kind, separated a little too far from a dozen or so of his regiment, found himself opposed to a French soldier who apparently was similarly placed;—it was a curious coincidence, and it would seem as if each felt that he individually was the representative of the country to which he belonged; and had the fate of the two nations hung upon the issue of the combat I am about to describe, it could not have been more heroically contested. The Frenchman fired at, and wounded Faris in the thigh, and made a desperate push with his bayonet at his body, but Faris parried the thrust, and the bayonet only lodged in his leg; he

saw at a glance the peril of his situation, and that nothing short of a miracle could save him;—the odds against him were too great, and if he continued a scientific fight he must inevitably be vanquished; he sprang forward, and seizing hold of the Frenchman by the collar, a struggle of a most nervous kind took place: in their mutual efforts to gain an advantage, they lost their caps, and as they were men of nearly equal strength, it was doubtful what the issue would be. They were so entangled with each other, their weapons were of no avail, but Faris at length disengaged himself from the grasp which held him, and he was able to use his sabre; he pushed the Frenchman from him, and ere he could recover himself he laid his head open nearly to the chin; his sword blade, a heavy, soft, ill-made Portuguese one, was doubled up with the force of the blow, and retained some pieces of the scull and clotted hair! At this moment I reached the spot with about twenty men, composed of different regiments, all being by this time mixed *pell mell* with each other. I ran up to Faris,—he was nearly exhausted, but he was safe. The French grenadier lay upon the pavement, while Faris, though tottering from fatigue, held his sword firmly in his grasp, and it was crimson to the hilt. The appearance of the two combatants was frightful!—one lying dead on the ground, the other faint from agitation and loss of blood; but the soldiers loudly applauded him, and the feeling uppermost with them was, that our man had the best of it! It was a shocking sight, but it would be rather a hazardous experiment to begin moralizing at such a moment and in such a place.

Those of the garrison who escaped death were made prisoners, and the necessary guards being placed, and everything secured, the troops not selected for duty commenced a very diligent search for those articles which they most fancied, and which they considered

themselves entitled to by "right of conquest." I believe on a service such as the present, there is a sort of tacit acknowledgment of this "right;" but be this as it may, a good deal of property most indubitably changed owners on the night of the 19th of January, 1812. The conduct of the soldiers too, within the last hour, had undergone a complete change; before, it was all order and regularity,—now, it was nothing but licentiousness and confusion—subordination was at an end; plunder and blood was the order of the day, and many an officer on this night was compelled to show that he carried a sabre.

The doors of the houses in a large Spanish town are remarkable for their strength, and resemble those of a prison more than anything else; their locks are of huge dimensions, and it is a most difficult task to force them. The mode adopted by the men of my regiment (the 88th) in this dilemma, was as effective as it was novel; the muzzles of a couple of muskets were applied to each side of the key-hole, while a third soldier, fulfilling the functions of an officer, deliberately gave the word, "make ready"—"present"—"fire!" and in an instant the ponderous lock gave way before the combined operations of the three individuals, and doors that rarely opened to the knock of a stranger in Rodrigo, now flew off their hinges to receive the Rangers of Connaught.

The failure of forcing open the houses in the unfortunate assault of Buenos Ayres, no doubt taught our fellows a lesson by which they profited on the present occasion; and had the South American army understood the art of war as well as the heroes of the Peninsula, so many valuable lives would not have been lost in endeavouring to force open doors strong enough to defy the powers of a battering-ram!

The chapels and chandler's houses were the first captured, in both of which was found a most essential

ingredient in the shape of large wax candles; these, the soldiers lighted, and commenced their perambulations in search of plunder, and the glare of light which they threw across the faces of the men as they carried them through the streets, displayed their countenances, which were of that cast that might well terrify the unfortunate inhabitants. Many of the soldiers with their faces scorched by the explosion of the magazine at the grand breach; others with their lips blackened from biting off the ends of their cartridges, more covered with blood, and all looking ferocious, presented a combination sufficient to appal the stoutest heart.

Scenes of the greatest outrage now took place, and it was pitiable to see groups of the inhabitants half naked in the streets—the females clinging to the officers for protection—while their respective houses were undergoing the strictest scrutiny. Some of the soldiers turned to the wine and spirit houses, where having drunk sufficiently, they again sallied out in quest of more plunder; others got so intoxicated, that they lay in a helpless state in different parts of the town, and lost what they had previously gained, either by the hands of any passing Spaniard, who could venture unobserved to stoop down, or by those of their own companions, who in their wandering surveys happened to recognize a comrade lying with half-a-dozen silk gowns, or some such thing, wrapt about him. Others wished to attack the different stores, and as there is something marvellously attractive in the very name of a brandy one, it is not to be wondered at that many of our heroes turned not only their thoughts, but their steps also, in the direction in which these houses lay; and from the unsparing hand with which they supplied themselves, it might be imagined they intended to change their habits of life and turn spirit venders, and that too in the wholesale line!

It was astonishing to see with what rapidity and accuracy these fellows traversed the different parts of the town, and found out the shops and storehouses. A stranger would have supposed they were natives of the place, and it was not until the following morning I discovered the cause of what was to me before incomprehensible.

In all military movements in a country which an army is not thoroughly acquainted with, (and why not in a large town?) there are no more useful appendages than good guides. Lord Wellington was most particular on this point, and had attached to his army a corps of this description. I suppose it was this knowledge of tactics which suggested to the soldiers the necessity of so wise a precaution; accordingly, every group of individuals was preceded by a Spaniard, who, upon learning the species of plunder wished for by his employers, instantly conducted them to the most favourable ground for their operations. By this means the houses were unfurnished with less confusion than can be supposed, and had it not been for the state of intoxication that some of the young soldiers—mere tyros in the art of sacking a town—had indulged themselves in, it is inconceivable with what facility the city of Ciudad Rodrigo would have been eased of its superfluities; and the *conducteur* himself was not always an idle spectator. Many of these fellows realized something considerable from their more wealthy neighbours, and being also right well paid by the soldiers, who were liberal enough, they found themselves in the morning in far better circumstances than they had been the preceding night, so that, all things considered, there were about as many cheerful faces as sad ones; but although the inhabitants were, by this sort of transfer, put more on an equality with each other, the town itself was greatly impoverished. Many things of value were destroyed, but in the hurry so natural to the occa-

sion, many also escaped; besides, our men were as yet young hands in the arcana of plundering a town in that *au fait* manner with which a French army would have done a business of the sort, but they, most unquestionably, made up for their want of tact, by the great inclination they showed to profit by any occasion that offered itself for their improvement.

By some mistake a large spirit store, situated in the Plaza Mayor, took fire, and the flames spreading with incredible fury, despite of the exertions of the troops, the building was totally destroyed; but in this instance, like many others which we are obliged to struggle against through life, there was a something that neutralized the disappointment which the loss of so much brandy occasioned the soldiers: the light which shone forth from the building was of material service to them, inasmuch as it tended to facilitate their movements in their excursions for plunder; the heat also was far from disagreeable, for the night was piercingly cold, yet, nevertheless, the soldiers exerted themselves to the utmost to put a stop to this calamity. General Picton was to be seen in the midst of them, encouraging them by his example and presence to make still greater efforts; but all would not do, and floor after floor fell in, until at last it was nothing but a burning heap of ruins.

Some houses were altogether saved from plunder by the interference of the officers, for in several instances the women ran out into the streets, and seizing hold of three or four of us would force us away to their houses, and by this stroke of political hospitality saved their property. A good supper was then provided, and while all outside was noise and pillage, affairs within went on agreeably enough. These instances, were, however, but few.

In the house where I and four other officers remained, we fared remarkably well, and were passing the night

greatly to our satisfaction when we were aroused by a noise, like a crash of something heavy falling in the apartment above us. As may be supposed, we did not remain long without seeking to ascertain the cause of this disturbance; the whole party sprang up at once —the family of the house secreting themselves behind the different pieces of furniture, while we, *sabre à la main*, and some with lights, advanced towards the apartment from whence the noise proceeded; but all was silent within. Captain Seton, of my corps, proposed that the door should be forced, but he had scarcely pronounced the words, when a voice from within called out, not in Spanish, or French, but in plain English, with a rich Irish brogue, "Oh, Jasus, is it you, Captain?" On entering we found a man of the Connaught Rangers, belonging to Seton's company, standing before us, so disfigured by soot and filth, that it was impossible to recognize his uniform, much less his face—his voice was the only thing recognizable about him, and that only to his captain; and had it not been for that, he might have passed for one just arrived from the infernal regions, and it may be questioned whether or not the place he had quitted might not be so denominated. It appeared, from the account he gave of himself, that he had been upon a plundering excursion in one of the adjoining houses, the roof of which, like most of those in Rodrigo, was flat, and wishing to have a distinct view of all that was passing in the streets, he took up his position upon the top of the house he had entered, and not paying due attention to where he put his foot, he contrived to get it into the chimney of the house we occupied, and ere he could resume his centre of gravity he tumbled headlong down the chimney, and caused us all the uneasiness I have been describing. His *tout ensemble* was as extraordinary as his adventure; he had eighteen or twenty pairs of shoes round his waist, and amongst

other things a case of trepanning instruments, which he immediately offered as a present to his Captain! Had the grate of this fireplace been what is called in England the "Rumford grate," this poor fellow must have been irretrievably lost to the service, because it is manifest, encumbered as he was, he would have stuck fast, and must inevitably have been suffocated before assistance could be afforded him; but, fortunately for him, the chimney was of sufficient dimensions to admit an elephant to pass down it, and, in truth, one not so constructed would have been altogether too confined for him.

Morning at length began to dawn, and with it the horrors of the previous night's assault were visible. The troops not on guard were directed to quit the town, but this was not a command they obeyed with the same cheerfulness or expedition which they evinced when ordered to enter it; in their eyes it had many attractions still, and, besides, the soldiers had become so unwieldy from the immense burdens they carried, it was scarcely possible for many of them to stir, much less march: however, by degrees the evacuation of the fortress took place, and towards noon it was effected altogether.

The breaches presented a horrid spectacle. The one forced by the light division was narrower than the other, and the dead lying in a smaller compass, looked more numerous than they really were. I walked along the ramparts towards the grand breach, and was examining the effects our fire had produced on the different defences and the buildings in their immediate vicinity, but I had not proceeded far when I was shocked at beholding about a hundred and thirty or forty wounded Frenchmen lying under one of the bastions and some short distance up a narrow street adjoining it. I descended, and learned that these men had been performing some particular duty

in a magazine, which through accident blew up, and these miserable beings were so burnt, that I fear, notwithstanding the considerate attention which was paid to them by our medical officers, none of their lives were preserved. Their uniforms were barely distinguishable, and their swollen heads and limbs gave them a gigantic appearance that was truly terrific; added to this, the gunpowder had so blackened their faces that they looked more like a number of huge negroes than soldiers of an European army. Many of our men hastened to the spot, and with that compassion which truly brave men always feel, rendered them every assistance in their power; some were carried on doors, others in blankets, to the hospitals, and these poor creatures showed by their gestures, for they could not articulate, how truly they appreciated our tender care of them.

At length I reached the grand breach—it was covered with many officers and soldiers; of the former, amongst others, was my old friend Hardyman of the 45th, and Lieutenant William Pearse of the same regiment; there were also two of the 5th, whose names I forget, and others whose faces were familiar to me. Hardyman, the once cheerful, gay Bob Hardyman, lay on his back; half of his head was carried away by one of those discharges of grape from the flank guns at the breach, which were so destructive to us in our advance; his face was perfect, and even in death presented its wonted cheerfulness. Poor fellow! he died without pain, and regretted by all who knew him; his gaiety of spirit never for an instant forsook him; up to the moment of the assault he was the same pleasant Bob Hardyman, who delighted every one by his anecdotes, and none more than my old corps, although many of his jokes were at our expense. When we were within a short distance of the breach, as we met, he stopped for an instant to

shake hands, "What's that you have hanging over your shoulder?" said he, as he espied a canteen of rum which I carried. "A little rum, Bob," said I. "Well," he replied, "I'll change my breath, and take my word for it, that in less than five minutes, some of the 'subs' will be scratching a Captain's ——, for there will be wigs on the green." He took a mouthful of rum, and taking me by the hand squeezed it affectionately, and in ten minutes afterwards he was a corpse!

The appearance of Pearse was quite different from his companion; ten or a dozen grape-shot pierced his breast, and he lay or rather sat beside his friend like one asleep, and his appearance was that of a man upwards of sixty, though his years did not number twenty-five. Hardyman was stripped to his trousers, but Pearse had his uniform on, his epaulettes alone had been plundered. I did not see the body of General Mackinnon, but the place where he fell was easily distinguishable, the vast chasm which the spot presented resembled an excavation in the midst of a quarry. The limbs of those who lost their lives by that fatal explosion, thrown here and there, presented a melancholy picture of the remnants of those brave men whose hearts, but a few short hours before, beat high in the hope of conquest. It was that kind of scene which arrested the attention of the soldier, and rivetted him to the spot; and there were few who, even in the moment of exultation, did not feel deeply as they surveyed the mangled remains of their comrades.

I next turned to the captured gun, so chivalrously taken by the three men of the 88th. The five cannoneers lying across the carriage, or between the spokes of the wheels, showed how bravely they had defended it—yet they lay like men whose death had not been caused by violence—they were naked and bloodless,

and the puncture of the bayonet left so small a mark over their hearts, it was discernible only to those who examined the bodies closely.

The details I have given of the capture of Rodrigo will, I believe, be found to be tolerably correct; I have in no way placed any one corps, much less division, above its companions—where all fought well, and did their utmost to conquer, I think such a comparison would be improper; but were I inclined to do so, I should give the preference to the Portuguese, under O'Toole, and for the reason that they surpassed the expectations we had of their success, because they were not a British corps. But I can in no way agree with the officer who wrote the "Sketch of the Storming of Ciudad Rodrigo," where he says, "Without doing injustice to the gallant third division, I fear that the attack of the great breach would have failed, had the small breach not been carried." The third division, upwards of three thousand strong, and composed of as good troops as any in the world, were certainly a match for one thousand one hundred or one thousand two hundred Frenchmen, which at most defended a practicable and wide breach. The same writer observes, "When the third division gained the top of the ramparts, they were in a manner enclosed and hemmed in, and had nowhere to go, while the enemy continued to fire upon them from some old ruined houses, only twenty yards distant. I am confident a plan would convince any person, that the light division extricated the third division from their disagreeable situation." The light division would, no doubt, as far as they could, have "extricated" the third division *if* they required it, but they did not, because that corps carried all before them after, without doubt, a most serious strife; but their success was never for an instant doubtful, although it was unavoidably protracted. The explosion upon the breach

necessarily caused some confusion and delay; how could it be otherwise? But from the time the brigade of Mackinnon passed the Fausse Braye, until the third divison had overcome all obstacles, half an hour did not elapse, and certainly, all things considered, this was not an unreasonable lapse of time. The same writer, in speaking of the dispositions made previous to the attack, says, "The third division had relieved the first as usual in the morning, but it did not return as usual to its quarters. If the Governor had kept a sharp look-out, he must have been expecting the assault; but 'I guess' he was no great things." The third division did not occupy the trenches until a short time previous to the assault, nor did they relieve the first division on that day.* Then again

* It has been repeatedly asserted that the reason why the third division, under Picton, were allowed the honour of storming the great breach was on the score of that division being working in the trenches before the great breach on the day of the assault, namely, the 19th of January. This assertion was made some years ago in a work entitled "Sketch of the Storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, by an officer engaged." This work was, I believe, written by Captain Cooke of the 43rd Regiment, and was contradicted by me when I read it; but since then a pamphlet, written and published by the late Colonel Gurwood, has asserted the same, and the name and authority of the Duke of Wellington are given in support of the assertion; nevertheless Captain Cooke, Colonel Gurwood, and the Duke of Wellington are in error.

Colonel Gurwood says (page 31) in his pamphlet, "The light division halted short of the besieging ground, occupied by the third division doing duty in the trenches, and being ordered to assault the great breach, the lesser breach having been allotted to the light division. After the receipt of the order, by General Crawford, for the light division to storm the lesser breach, that officer remonstrated with Lord Wellington, and claimed for it, as it had broken ground, the honour of assaulting the great breach from the trenches. Lord Wellington told General Crawford that he could not insult the third division by turning them out of the trenches to make room for the light division; and that as to privileges, he had experience in sieges, and knew of

he observes, "Neither were there any officers among the dead, or else they were carried away." So late as nine o'clock on the morning of the 20th, there were those I have mentioned, but whether they were there or not, is surely of little consequence.

I turned away from the breach, and scrambled over its rugged face, and the dead which covered it. On reaching the *bivouack* we had occupied the preceding evening, I learned, with surprise, that our women had been engaged in a contest, if not as dangerous as ours, at least one of no trivial sort. The men left as a guard over the baggage, on hearing the first shot at the trenches, could not withstand the inclination they

none but obedience to orders. The Duke of Wellington mentioned this to me many years afterwards, when speaking of General Crawford."

If, as Colonel Gurwood states in page 31 of his pamphlet, the third division were "doing duty in the trenches" on the 19th of January, the day of the assault, the Colonel must be in error in page 29 (*which he is not*) where he says:—

"The light division were in the trenches three times during the siege, viz., the 8th, the 12th, and the 17th, being relieved alternately by the first, fourth, and third divisions," &c. &c.

"On the night of the 17th I was on duty on the midnight relief, &c. &c. At the end of the four hours (four A. M. of the 18th,) while anxiously waiting the hour of relief from the striking of the clock of the cathedral," &c. &c.

Now the light division, according to the order of relief as set down by Colonel Gurwood, and he is perfectly right, was relieved on the 18th (about mid-day) by the first division; the first division in like manner was relieved by the fourth division (about mid-day) on the 19th, and consequently were *in* the trenches *at work* the entire day of the 19th, and would have continued there at work until mid-day of the 20th had not the light division and the third division carried the place by storm on the evening of the 19th.

It is therefore an error—and a very grave one too—to assert that the third division was throwing up earth in the trenches on the 19th; and I am surprised that officers who write on military matters, and who are so well aware of the jealousy that is felt by soldiers on these points, are not more correct in what they state.

felt to join their companions; and although this act was creditable to the bravery of the individuals that composed the baggage-guard, it was nigh being fatal to those who survived, or, at least, to such as had anything to lose except their lives, for the wretches that infested our camp, attempted to plunder it of all that it possessed, but the women, with a bravery that would not have disgraced those of ancient Rome, defended the post with such valour, that those miscreants were obliged to desist, and our baggage was saved in consequence.

We were about to resume our arms when General Picton approached us. Some of the soldiers who were more than usually elevated in spirits, on his passing them, called out, "Well, General, we gave you a cheer last night: it's your turn now!" The General, smiling, took off his hat, and said, "Here then, you drunken set of brave rascals, hurrah! we'll soon be at Badajoz!" A shout of confidence followed: we slung our firelocks, the bands played, and we commenced our march for the village of Atalaya in the highest spirits, and in a short time lost sight of a place, the capture of which appeared to us like a dream.

CHAPTER XVII.

Results of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo—Lieutenant Gurwood and Lieutenant Mackie—Anecdote of Lieutenant Flack, 88th Regiment—His wound—Sale of the plunder—Army rest in cantonments.

THE fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo fell on the eleventh day after its investment; and taking into account the season of the year, the difficulty of the means to carry on the operations, and the masterly manner in which Lord Wellington baffled the vigilance of the Duke of Ragusa, the capture of Rodrigo must ever rank as one of the most finished military exploits upon record, and a *chef d'œuvre* of the art of war.

Our loss was equal to that of the enemy; it amounted to about one thousand *hors de combat*, together with three generals; of the garrison but seventeen hundred were made prisoners, the rest being put to the sword. Yet, notwithstanding the off-hand manner in which the place was laid siege to, and the slashing style it was carried by the bayonet, there were many people —I must say unreasonable ones—who found fault with Wellington for his mode of attack, as also for his in-

activity after his victory. One writer*—a Frenchman of course—says, "he," (meaning Lord Wellington,) "might have easily carried off the French advanced guard, which, on the 22nd, made its appearance near Tamames. The enterprise was favoured by the occupation of Ciudad Rodrigo, as the detachment entrusted with the operation would have had a safe retreat under the cannon of the town. Fifteen thousand choice men ought to have been placed in ambush on the road to Salamanca. A corps of four or five thousand light troops should have marched against the French, with orders to fall back at their approach. These light troops, when near the ambush, would have hastened their retreat, in apparent confusion, which would have induced the French to be more eager in the pursuit. The concealed soldiers, then rushing from the ambush, would have fallen upon the rear of the French column, and infallibly destroyed it. It is by manœuvres like the one here described that the forces of an enemy are ruined, without experiencing the enormous losses occasioned by sieges and battles."†

All this may be very true, and, had Lord Wellington done what Monsieur Sarrazin says he could and should have done, he, most unquestionably, would have done more than he did; but as it was, bungler as he is,—for it is well known that every man in France is ready to take his oath that he is so, and, to the shame of our own country, there are not wanting those who are willing to leash-in in the general cry raised against this great man by the fellows he has trounced from the heights of Lisbon to the walls of Paris,—he did as much in eleven days, in the depth of a severe winter, with twenty thousand men, as the hero of Rivoli and Esling and the conqueror of Suwarrow was able to

* General Sarrazin. † Bobadil was nothing to this fellow.

accomplish in twenty-five days, in summer, with forty thousand French veterans against a Spanish garrison! It is clear, however, that Marshal Marmont was a little puzzled at what had taken place. On the 16th of January he wrote to Berthier: "I had collected five divisions, for the purpose of throwing supplies into Ciudad Rodrigo, but this force is now inadequate to the object. I am, therefore, under the necessity of recalling two divisions from the army of the north. I shall then have above sixty thousand men, with whom I shall march against the enemy. You may expect events as fortunate as glorious for the French army." But in spite of these flattering promises, he was obliged to write to Prince Berthier on the 20th: "On the 16th the English batteries opened their fire at a great distance. On the 19th the place was taken by storm, and fell into the power of the enemy. There is something so incomprehensible in this event, that I allow myself no observation. I am not provided with the requisite information." This speaks a volume, and renders it quite unnecessary to say more on the subject.

Lord Wellington has been also censured for allowing generals to place themselves at the head of the columns that attacked Rodrigo. "A general officer," says Monsieur Sarrazin, "is extremely valuable, especially when he is skilled in his profession. General Crawford possessed the qualities for a commander-in-chief; whilst, at the head of a storming column, his thin person and diminutive size rendered him inferior to a grenadier." This is a just remark, because, beyond all doubt, the commanding officer of a battalion is as likely, if not more so, than a general, to lead his men through a breach. Neither at Rodrigo nor Badajoz did General Picton head his division, and their success in both was as complete as if he had; and why

not? a general is supposed to direct, a colonel to lead; and if any proof were wanting to prove the truth of this assertion, the success of the third division at both Rodrigo and Badajoz, the latter "one of the most astonishing exploits mentioned in history," ought to suffice.

The two officers who led the forlorn-hope at each breach escaped unhurt; but although fortune favoured both equally in the field, the results which followed were widely different. And here I wish I could lay down my pen; but justice must be done to the living as well as the dead. Lieutenant Gurwood of the 52nd, who led the forlorn-hope of Crawford's division, obtained a company, and in the course of a few years, in consequence, rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel; while the brave Lieutenant William Mackie of the 88th, who so gallantly volunteered, and so bravely led on the forlorn-hope of the third division, notwithstanding the promise of General Mackinnon, which ought to have been held sacred, was altogether passed over by General Picton; his name was not even mentioned, nor did he gain promotion for his conduct. But this was only the commencement of a series of slights which I regret being obliged to say the 88th met with for the four years and a-half that General Picton commanded the third division, during which long period—it is worthy of remark—*not one officer of that regiment was ever promoted through his recommendation!* No officer ever better merited promotion than Lieutenant Mackie, and none was ever worse treated. He volunteered the forlorn-hope in the handsomest manner—led it on in the most gallant style—and what was his reward for such conduct? He was passed over without so much as being noticed by his general, for conduct that gained his fellow forlorn-hope companion an immediate step, which placed him high up amongst

the lieutenant-colonels in the army, while Mackie remained—after a lapse of twenty years—a captain!*

> "I know a man, of whom 'tis truly said,
> He bravely twice a storming party led,
> And volunteered both times—now here's the rub,
> The gallant fellow still remains a sub."†

These four pithy lines have relation to Ensign Dyas of the 51st Regiment; but Dyas, unlucky as he was, was more fortunate than Mackie, because his bravery was officially proclaimed to the world in Lord Wellington's account of the two attacks of San Christoval, and His Royal Highness, the late lamented Duke of York, made every possible reparation in his power, the moment the mistake—for it was a mistake—was made known to him, and had he continued in the service, there can be no doubt that his lost rank would have been made up.

It was once remarked by the French general, Brennier, that too much was exacted from the subalterns of the British army, and more than the Emperor Napoleon, all powerful as he was, would venture to attempt with his; but if General Brennier heard that the *senior* lieutenant of a distingushed regiment, —and one, too, who had greatly signalized himself on other occasions,—had successfully led a forlorn-hope, which service he had volunteered, and that the general under whom he served did not so much as notice this officer for such conduct—if, I say, General Brennier knew this, I should be monstrously curious to hear what he would say touching the conduct of such a general!

When Mackie volunteered to lead the advance, those who witnessed the manner in which he did it

* Gained a brevet step in 1831, after being nineteen years a captain, which rank he obtained in his regular turn!

† Johnny Newcombe, p. 77.

will, I think, bear me out when I say that glory, and not emolument was his object. He was at the moment the senior lieutenant, and he might reasonably look for speedy promotion without thrusting his head amongst a forlorn-hope party to gain it; he looked forward with that pride, which cannot be styled vanity, to see, if he survived, his name enrolled amongst the list of those who merited praise, or, if he fell, it would be a consolation to him in his last moments to think that his friends and relatives knew that he did so while serving his king and country in one of the most perilous situations in which a man can be placed. If, on the other hand, promotion should be—as it was—given to his fellow forlorn-hope companion, he certainly had a right to expect the same; but twenty years of his life have passed—his rank has been lost to him, and his fame, if not blasted,—that it could not be!—has been denied its just and hardly-earned reward.

Now this gallant conduct of Mr. Mackie was known to General Picton who, being,—at least his biographer says so;—" a strict disciplinarian," and had " a strong sense of justice," it will naturally be supposed that on such an occasion as the present, the general would have given a proof of his " sense of justice." But what is the real fact? Let the division order issued by Picton on the 20th of January—the day after the assault—speak for itself. It gives a much truer insight into the character of the general than his biographer has been able to accomplish in the eight hundred and thirty-five pages he has written on the subject.

" DIVISION ORDER BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL PICTON.

" Zamarra, 20th of January, 1812.

" By the gallant manner in which the breach was last night carried by storm, the third division has

added much credit to its military reputation, and has rendered itself the most conspicuous corps in the British army.

"Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, commanding the right Brigade and 94th Regiment, Lieutenant-colonel Donkin, commanding 77th, and Major Ridge, the second battalion, 5th Regiment, are peculiarly entitled to the thanks of the Lieutenant-general, *as having led and carried the breach*; as is Major Manners, 74th Regiment, who volunteered the storming party, and Captain Milne, of the 45th Regiment, for the able support of the attack," &c.

I have given these two extracts from this division-order of General Picton, and if the reader can find either good taste or "a strong sense of justice" in either, it is more than I can. It was not good taste to say that Picton's division was "the most conspicuous corps in the British army," particularly as the light division, who also fought on this night, and carried the other breach, was ever considered in the army to be *as* "*conspicuous*" as any other. This, I say, was not good taste.

Lieutenant William Mackie, voluntered and successfully led the forlorn-hope. Major R. Manners, volunteered and successfully led the storming party, which Mackie preceded with his forlorn-hope. Manners was noticed in the division order, and was in consequence promoted. Mackie was *not* noticed, and consequently *not* promoted. Did this neglect of Mackie shew "a strong sense of justice?"

So soon as my regiment reached the village of Atalaya, its former quarters, I obtained leave to return to Rodrigo, for I was anxious to see in what situation the family were, with whom I, in common with my companions, had passed the preceding night. Upon entering the town, I found all in confusion; the troops ordered to occupy it were not any of those which had composed the storming divisions; and although the

task of digging graves, and clearing away the rubbish about the breaches was not an agreeable one, they nevertheless performed it with much cheerfulness; yet, in some instances, the soldiers levied contributions upon the unfortunate inhabitants, light ones it is true, and for the reason that little remained with them to give, or more properly speaking, withhold; but the Provost-Marshal was so active in his vocation, that this calamity was soon put a stop to, and the miserable people, who were in many instances in a state of nudity, could without risk venture to send to their more fortunate neighbours for a supply of those articles of dress which decency required. Upon reaching the house I had rested in the evening before, I was rejoiced to find it uninjured, and the poor people, upon once more seeing me, almost suffocated me with their caresses, and their expressions of gratitude knew no bounds for our having preserved their house from pillage.

The house occupied by myself, Captain Seton, and three or four more, was, as I before said, intruded upon by a fellow of the Connaught Rangers, who took upon himself to walk down the chimney; we had scarcely rid ourselves of him, when a loud knocking at the street door—the sure harbinger of a group of marauders—brought us once more upon our legs. We ran to the window to ascertain the cause, but had scarcely reached the balcony when some drunken fellows, from the opposite side of the street, discharged their muskets at us. The wood-work was shattered about our ears, but fortunately no one was hurt, and when we made good our retreat, which was certainly a rapid one, and that all was safe, Seton began humming, sweetly but faintly, the little French air, "*Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat.*" The knocking at the door continued, and was immediately followed by a discharge of musketry, such as I have before described, against that part of the pannel nearest the key-hole. I was the first that reached the

spot, and by the light of a huge wax candle, that had been thrust through the dismantled pannel, with pleasure, though not surprise, I found the man who held it to be, not only a Connaught Ranger, but one of my own company, his name was Noonan. "Noonan," said I, "you cannot come in here." "Can't I, sir," said he. "No, you cannot," said I. "And why can't I, sir?" replied he; "Because," I replied, "I have promised to protect the family of this house, and I will do so at all risks." "Oh! then blur-an-ouns, is it talking of risks you are when Pat Noonan is, next or nigh your honour? but how will I palaver these Englishmen of the light division, that's forty times worse than ourselves, (iv that be possible!) afther a dhrop iv dhrink?" Repeated knocks at the door, and loud execrations, put a stop to any further dialogue between me and Pat Noonan, and proved but too truly that the account he gave of his associates was not exaggerated. A violent altercation, of which I could not distinguish a word, now took place; in a few moments afterwards all was silent, and after a lapse of a minute or so, Noonan thrust in his head again and said, "You may make yourself aisy now, for they won't throuble the house any more." "Why, what did you say to them?" "What did I say to them is it? I tould them a big lie any how—I tould them your honour was the docthur iv the regiment, and that you were just afther cuttin the leg iv a poor cratur, and that you were going to sarve four more afther the same fashion. I knew as soon as they'd hear-tell iv your cuttin off the leg iv the 'boy,' that they'd go away—and it was thrue for me they did!" "Noonan," I replied, "you are an honest fellow, and I won't forget your behaviour." "Honest is it? fait and sure, the Connaught Rangers is all honest for that matter—only our General (God prosper him!) tells us another story."

I barricadoed the door in the best manner I could,

and we all got round the fire once more; the merits of different officers and soldiers, as well as divers bowls of brandy punch, were freely discussed, and it was late before we retired to rest for the night; but previous to doing so, I went once more to the balcony, in order to ascertain how matters went on in the street, and to my astonishment found that Noonan was standing sentinel at the door; who, at my recommendation, was made a serjeant next day.

Having satisfied myself that my patrona and her daughters had escaped molestation, I took my leave of them, and once more visited the large breach. On my way thither, I saw the French garrison preparing to march, under an escort of Portuguese troops, to the fortress of Almeida; they were a fine-looking body of men, and seemed right well pleased to get off so quietly; they counted about eighteen hundred, and were all that escaped unhurt of the garrison. At the breach there were still several wounded men, who had not been removed to the hospitals; amongst them was a fellow of my own corps, of the name of Doogan; he was badly wounded in the thigh, the bone of which was so shattered as to protrude through the skin; near him lay a French soldier, shot through the body, quite frantic from pain, and in the agonies of death. The moment Doogan observed me, he called out most lustily, "Och! for the love of Jasus, Mr. Grattan, don't lave me here near this villain that's afther cursing me to no end." I observed to Doogan that the poor fellow was in a much worse state than even himself, and that I doubted whether he would be alive in five minutes. At this moment the eyes of the Frenchman met mine, "*Oh! monsieur,*" exclaimed he, "*je meurs pour une goutte d'eau! Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*" "Now," ejaculated Doogan, addressing me, "will you believe me, (that never tould a lie in my life!) another time? Did you hear him then, how he got on with his *mon*

dew?" I caused Doogan to be carried to an hospital; but the French soldier died as we endeavoured to place him in a blanket.

I quitted the breach, and took a parting glance at the town; the smell from the still burning houses, the groups of dead and wounded, and the broken fragments of different weapons, marked strongly the character of the preceding night's dispute; and even at this late hour, there were many drunken marauders endeavouring to regain, by some fresh act of atrocity, an equivalent for the plunder their brutal state of intoxication had caused them to lose by the hands of their own companions, who robbed indiscriminately man, woman, or child, friend or foe, the dead or the dying! Then, again, were to be seen groups of deserters from our army, who, having taken shelter in Rodrigo during the winter, were now either dragged from their hiding places by their merciless comrades, or given up by the Spaniards, in whose houses they had sought shelter, to the first officer or soldier who would be troubled, at the moment, with the responsibility of taking charge of them.

In the midst of a group of a dozen men, deserters from different regiments, stood two of the Connaught Rangers. No matter what their other faults might be, desertion was not a species of delinquency they were addicted to; and as the fate of one of these men—indeed both of them, for that matter—was a little tragical, I purpose giving it a nook in my adventures. The two culprits to whom I have made allusion were as different in their characters as persons; one of them (Mangin) a quiet, well-disposed man, short in stature, a native of England, and, as a matter of course, a heavy feeder, one that could but ill put up with "short allowance," and in consequence left the army when food became as scarce as it did in the winter of 1811. The other, a fellow of the name of Curtis, an Irishman,

tall and lank, and, like the rest of the "boys" from that part of the world, was mighty aisy about what he ate, provided he got a reasonable supply of drink; but as neither the one nor the other were "convenient" during the period in question, they both left an advanced post one fine night, and resolved to try the difference between the French commissariat and ours. This was their justification of themselves to me, and I believe, for I was not present at it, the *summum bonum* upon which the basis of their defence at their trial rested. There were also six Germans of the 60th Rifles in the group, but they seemed so unnerved by their unexpected capture, that they were unable to say anything for themselves. I, most unquestionably, felt much for these poor wretches; I bore strong in my own recollection what I had myself suffered from an empty stomach; and the old adage, which I had often heard repeated, "that hunger will break through a stone wall," was in the present instance, I thought, fully illustrated; for these men, without any other aid than a craving for food, made their way with greater ease into the strong fortress of Rodrigo than we were able to do, backed, as we were, by the fire of several powerful batteries.

Towards evening I reached the village which my regiment occupied. An altered scene presented itself. The soldiers busied in arranging their different articles of plunder; many of them clad in the robes of some priest, while others wore gowns of the most costly silk or velvet; others, again, nearly naked; some without pantaloons, having been plundered, while drunk, of so essential a part of their dress; but all, or almost all, were occupied in laying out for sale their different articles of plunder, in that order which was essential to their being disposed of to the crowds of Spaniards which had already assembled to be the purchasers; and if one could judge by their looks, they most un-

questionably committed a breach in their creed, by "coveting their neighbours' goods;" and had the scene which now presented itself to our sight been one caused by an event the most joyous, much less by the calamity that had befallen the unfortunate inhabitants of Rodrigo, to say nothing of the human blood that had been spilt ere that event had taken place, the scene could not have been more gay. Brawney-shouldered Castilians, carrying pig-skins of wine on their backs, which they sold to our soldiers for a trifling sum; bolero-dancers, rattling their castanets like the clappers of so many mills; our fellows drinking like fishes, while their less fortunate companions at Rodrigo—either hastily flung into an ill-formed grave, writhing under the knife of the surgeon, or in the agonies of death—were unthought of, or unfelt for. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* The soldiers were allowed three days *congè* for the disposal of their booty; but long before the time had expired, they had scarcely a rag to dispose of, or a *real* of the produce in their pockets.

While this "shilloo" was carried on throughout the division, the officers had little to do except amuse themselves; the country abounded in game; and those who fancied field sports, had no lack of opportunities to indulge themselves in such pursuits. Taking advantage of this state of things, I rode over to the hospital near La Corrida, with the view of seeing an officer of my regiment, of the name of Flack, who had been desperately wounded by a round shot, two days before the storming of the place. The nature of the wound, as well as its cause, was extraordinary; and being greatly interested for the fate of a brother officer, I took an early opportunity to inquire after him. I found him stretched upon a miserable truss of straw; at his feet lay his faithful little spaniel bitch, Fidèle, beside him stood a huge earthen jar, or, as the Spaniards call it, panella of water, while at his head sat, in a dejected

posture, his servant Larry Fegan; he had been, for many years, Flack's bat-man, servant-man, and he might now be termed his right-hand man. He was a perfect prototype of Teague O'Connor, of whose history, as well as his master, Johnny Newcome, there are few, I should hope, of my readers ignorant. The moment I entered the room, Larry put his finger to his nose, and pointing to his master, gave me to understand that I was not to speak to him; but poor Flack was so rejoiced to see me, that he commenced talking, and he would, I believe, have continued while he had a puff of breath left, had I not declared I would leave him if he did not desist.

It was now Larry's turn; and he began to recount, with much minuteness, his master's adventure; and from everything I could learn, it was evident that Flack had exposed himself very foolishly, and to very little purpose. It appeared that a man of his company having been killed while at work in an advanced battery, he wished to pay a just tribute to his gallantry, and going out, accompanied by three soldiers, in front of the works, commenced preparing a grave for this soldier, who, it seems, had much distinguished himself. The enemy no sooner perceived this hardihood of behaviour, than they opened a fire against the party; their first discharge was sufficient to disperse it, and Lieutenant Flack fell, struck by a round shot in the thigh, which carried away the flesh from nearly the groin to the knee, while, at the same instant, four musket balls passed through different parts of his body. He was carried out of the works in an insensible state, and the surgeons judged it expedient to take the thigh out of the socket, a delicate operation, to which he objected.

The foregoing is the *substance* of Larry Fegan's "detail," I shall give the continuation in his own phraseology.

"The docthur," said Larry, in winding up his narrative, "came here yesterday with his 'God save all here,' and turning to me said, 'Your masther, it's like, isn't dead yet?' 'You may say that with your own ugly mouth,' says I (to myself), for I was aloath to offind him, seeing how complately my poor masther's life was in his hands. 'No, sir,' says I, 'he's as alive as your honour.' 'Had he much himmorige* since I saw him?' says he. Now when he got on about the himmorige, I knew what he was at, and that he only wanted to thry iv I gave my masther too much to ate; so says I, quite bould (because I followed his directions about the ateing), 'the devil receave the himmorige he tasted, iv I except the little dhrop iv gruel your honour ordered me to give him;' and upon the same, its what the baste began to laff in my face." Larry was about to continue his narration, when the arrival of the staff-surgeon of the fourth division, accompanied by different surgeons and their assistants, put a stop to any further colloquy.

It was the general opinion amongst the medical officers that he could not survive the effects of the shock forty-eight hours; he nevertheless made a most rapid recovery, and although he was, by some mistake, reported dead, and gazetted as so, he was in a few months nearly as well as before he was wounded.

The entrance of the medical gentlemen was the signal for my departure. They commenced the operation of unbandaging the mangled thigh of my poor friend, around which there appeared to me to be about as many folds of wrapping as usually envelope the body of an Egyptian mummy; but before I left the hospital altogether, I was assured by one of the medical men, that there was every prospect of Flack's recovery.

A few days sufficed for the re-organization of the

* Larry, no doubt, mistook the doctor's words as well as their meaning. I suppose he said hæmorrhage.

soldiers after they had disposed of their hard-earned plunder, and we were once more ready and willing for any fresh enterprise, no matter how difficult or dangerous. Badajoz was talked of, but nothing certain was known, and the quiet which reigned throughout all our departments was such, as not to warrant the least suspicion that any immediate attack against that fortress was contemplated by the Commander-in-chief.

On the sixth day after our arrival at Atalaya, we were again in motion; the village of Albergaria was allotted for our quarters, and a court-martial was ordered to assemble for the trial of the deserters from our army found in Rodrigo. The men of the 60th, and the two men of the 88th (Mangin and Curtis) were amongst the number. The court held its sitting —the prisoners were arraigned, found guilty, and sentenced to be shot! All were bad characters, save one, and that one was Mangin. He received testimonials from the captain of his company, (Captain Seton—ever the soldier's friend,) highly creditable to him, and Lord Wellington, with his accustomed love of justice, resolved that his pardon should be promulgated at the time of the reading the proceedings and sentence of the court-martial. Three days after the trial, it was made known to the prisoners, and the army generally, that they were to die the following morning.

At eight o'clock the division was under arms, and formed in a hollow square of small dimensions; in the centre of it was the Provost-Marshal, accompanied by his followers, with pick-axes, spades, shovels, and all the necessary etceteras for marking out and forming the graves into which the unfortunate delinquents were to be deposited as soon as they received the last and most imposing of military honours—that of being shot to death! In a few moments afterwards, the rolling of muffled drums—the usual accompaniment of the

death-march—was heard; and the soldiers who guarded the prisoners were soon in sight. The division observed a death-like silence as the prisoners defiled round the inside of the square; every eye was turned towards them; but Mangin, from his well-known good character, was an object of general solicitude. The solitary sound of the muffled drums at last died away into silence—the guard drew up in the centre of the square, and the prisoners had, for the last time, a view of their companions from whom they had deserted, and of their colours which they had forsaken; but if their countenances were a just index of their minds, they seemed to repent greatly the act they had committed! The three men of the 60th were in their shirts, as was also Mangin of the 88th, but Curtis wore the "old red rag," most likely from necessity, having, in all human probability, *no shirt to die in;* a circumstance by no means rare with the soldiers of the Peninsula army.

The necessary preliminaries, such as reading the crime, and finding the sentence, had finished, when the Adjutant-general announced the pardon granted to Mangin, who was immediately conducted away, and placed at a short distance in rear of the division; the rest staggered onward to the spot where their graves had been dug, and having been placed on their knees, their legs hanging over the edge of the grave, a bandage was tied over their eyes; the Provost-Marshal then, with a party of twenty musketeers, their firelocks cocked, and at the recover, silently moved in front of the prisoners until he reached to within five paces of them, and then giving two motions of his hand—the one to present, the other to fire—the four men fell into the pit prepared to receive them. The three Germans were dead—indeed they were nearly so before they were fired at! And if the state of their nerves was a criterion to go by, a moderate sized pop-gun would have been sufficiently destructive to have finished their earthly career; but Curtis sprang up, and with

one of his jaws shattered, and hanging down upon his breast, presented a horrid spectacle. Every one seemed to be electrified, the Provost-Marshal excepted; he, I suppose, was well accustomed to such sights, for without any ceremony, he walked up to Curtis, and with the most perfect composure levelled a huge instrument (in size between a horse-pistol and blunderbuss) at his head, which blew it nearly off his shoulders, and he fell upon the bodies of the Germans without moving a muscle.

This ceremony over, the division defiled round the grave, and as each company passed it, the word "eyes right," was given by the officer in command, by which means every man had a clear view of the corpses as they lay in a heap. This is a good and wholesome practice, for nothing so much awakes in the mind of the soldier, endowed with proper feeling, the dishonour of committing an action which is almost certain to bring him to a disgraceful end, while it deters the bad man from doing that which will cost him all that he has to lose,—for such persons have no character,—his life. It was ten o'clock before the parade broke up, and we returned to our quarters, leaving to the Provost-Marshal and his guard the task of filling up the grave. Several Portuguese peasants crowded near the fatal spot, and so soon as all danger was passed, they flocked to witness the interment, making, all the time, divers appeals to the Virgin Mary; but whether these were intended for the preservation of the souls departed, or their own bodies corporate, I neither knew nor enquired.

Mangin, the man who had received his pardon, was still in a state of stupor; after the lapse of an hour or so, his Captain went to see him; but the shock he had received was too severe; he had not nerve to bear up against it; he replied in an incoherent manner, soon fell asleep, and awoke an idiot! Every effort that could be made by the medical men, and every assurance

of favour from his Captain, proved vain—he became a palpable, irreclaimable idiot, and shortly afterwards died of convulsions.

The consternation with which the capture of Rodrigo had filled the French army, made it paramountly necessary for Lord Wellington to mask with the greatest caution his intended operation against Badajoz, but it nevertheless began to be whispered that such was his design: indeed it required but little knowledge of the man, or of the splendid troops he commanded—now in that state of efficiency which no British army ever surpassed, and impressed with a feeling of their own decided superiority over those boasted and hitherto invincible legions, which the testimony of countless victories was sufficient to attest—to feel assured that such a General and such an army could not remain inactive, while it might be truly, and without bombast, said, that the fate of Europe depended in a great measure upon their exertions. But how was this to be effected? Not by remaining inactive in Portugal; but to advance into the heart of Spain, with such a fortress as Badajoz, (occupied by an enemy,) in their rear, would be next to madness; it therefore was palpably manifest that Badajoz must fall, or the British army and its General lose their character. Of all this Lord Wellington was aware, and he adopted his measures accordingly. A powerful battering train, composed of guns supplied by the vessels of war in the Tagus, were embarked on board ships of heavy tonnage at Lisbon; those ships put to sea to avoid suspicion, and when out of sight of the port, re-shipped the guns into vessels of a smaller size, which carried them up the Tagus. By this means, the entire train, with the necessary stores, were landed in a part of the country where animals could, without difficulty, be procured to drag them to the banks of the Guadiana, and by this finished *ruse* on the part of Lord Wellington, the enemy were ignorant of the formidableness of his

means of attack. At Elvas, only three leagues distant from Badajoz, the engineers were directed to cause a vast supply of fascines and gabions to be prepared, but this created no suspicion, because that fortress was an extensive one, and it might well be supposed that these materials were destined for its use. Those preparations were followed by others—if not as imposing in their aspect, of equal necessity to the success of the enterprize, and more complex in their execution—the forming of magazines at so difficult a season of the year, sufficient to supply an army of fifty thousand men with food; but all was completed early in the month of March.

Lulled into security by the apparent supineness of his adversary, and also by the extensive works he had constructed for the defence of Badajoz, Soult had, or thought he had, little to apprehend for its safety. General Lacy, Engineer-in-chief to the army of the South, was intrusted with the superintendence of the dispositions necessary for its defence, and this officer reported to the French Marshal that the place was amply garrisoned with chosen troops, amounting to five thousand men and upwards,—that it contained provisions for two months, and that the guns and mortars placed in battery, counted above two hundred pieces of ordnance of large calibre, in the best possible state, with a proportionate supply of ball and powder. The garrison was moreover commanded by General Count Phillipon, considered to be one of the best engineers in the imperial army, and whose two recent successful defences had inspired the greatest confidence amongst his troops. Thus circumstanced, it may be fairly said, that never was a place in a better state, better supplied, and better provided with the requisite number of troops. All this took place in the middle of February, and towards the end of that month it was known in the army that Badajoz was to be attacked.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Preparations against Badajoz—Description of this fortress—Its investment—Line of circumvallation formed in the night—Sortie of the garrison repulsed—Destructive fire of the besieged—Dreadful explosion from a shell—Indifference—Deaths of Captain Mulcaster, Majors Thomson and North—The divisions of the British army.

THE soldiers were full of ardour; they anxiously counted the hours as they passed; and when at length, on the 8th of March, the order arrived for the advance of the army to the Alemtejo, their joy was indescribable. Badajoz had ever been looked upon by them as unfriendly to our troops, and they contemplated with delight the prospect of having it in their power to retaliate upon the inhabitants their treatment of our men. On the 9th, the army was in movement; the light division opened the march, followed by the third and fourth; they crossed the Tagus by a bridge of boats, thrown over that river at Villa Velha, and pressed rapidly forward towards Elvas. One division of infantry and a brigade of cavalry remained on the Agueda. On the 14th, the light and third divisions were concentrated in the neighbourhood of Elvas; they were joined by the fourth division on the following day, while the remainder of the army, under

Hill and Graham, were pushed forward to Llerena, Merida, and Almendralejo, to observe the motions of the Duke of Dalmatia, who by this time was informed of the preparations, though not to their full extent, that had been formed against Badajoz.

The city of Badajoz, which had already been the theatre of two sieges, arising out of the first of which one of the most sanguinary battles of modern times, considering the numbers engaged, was fought; subsequently the scene of a great reverse to our troops, and *now* about to be the grave of several thousands of the flower of the British army, is a considerable town in Spanish Estremadura. The great efforts that were made on the part of the English General to possess himself of it, as likewise the obstinate pertinacity with which it was defended by the enemy, which, taking into account the losses on both sides, including the battle of Albuera, cost the armies of the two nations a loss of between twenty-five and thirty thousand veteran soldiers, sufficiently mark it to the reader as a place worthy of his notice. It stands on a point of land at the union of the rivulet of the Rivellas with the Guadiana, the former a tributary stream, meandering round the south-east of the fortress, and passing close to the ravelin called San Roque, which forms a sort of *tête-du-pont* to a bridge that protects the entrance to the gate named *El puerto del Talavera*, and covering a reservoir and sluice on the Rivellas which finally empties itself into the Guadiana. A bold and rocky height, one hundred feet above the level of the river, at this point upwards of two hundred and fifty toises in breadth, is out-topped by an old Moorish castle which stands above the other works, and overlooks the junction of the Rivellas with the Guadiana, lording it, in a manner, over the entire.

The fortifications of the castle consist of a wall without ditch or counterscarp; but the curtains and

bastions are regular, and their height upwards of thirty-five feet; in many parts the wall is nearer forty than thirty-five feet high, owing in some measure to the inequality of the ground, but principally in consequence of a trench having been sunk (where the soil, which is very rocky, would admit of it) since the former siege. Besides this, there were two outworks on the left of the Guadiana, one called La Picurina, within two hundred and fifty toises of the body of the place, and standing on the right bank of the Rivellas; the other, a fort named Pardaleras, distant only half that space from the walls of the town, and situated between the lower Guadiana and the fort of Picurina. On the right bank of the river is the hill and fort of San Christoval—so memorable, and so disastrous to our arms in the siege of the former year—to which outwork had been added another, built on the site where our batteries stood when that fort was so gallantly, yet so fatally attacked by the seventh division: this new work was called Moncœur; and there was another fort at the head of the Roman bridge, standing a gun-shot below San Christoval, but feeble, being commanded on every side. Those works formed the exterior defence of Badajoz, and were, as well as the town itself, in the most efficient state.

On the 16th of March, everything being in readiness, a pontoon bridge was thrown across the Guadiana; fifteen thousand men broke up from their *bivouac* at Elvas, and advanced towards the river; the enemy disputed the ground, and here—even here, with only a handful of cavalry opposed to us—the French horsemen had actually the best of it, and kept us at bay during a march of three hours. At length we gained the river's edge—passed the bridge—drove back the enemy's outposts, and completed the investment. The following day, the 17th, Lord Wellington, accompanied by his engineers, carefully reconnoitred the place. He

found its aspect materially changed; the parapets of the castle had been considerably raised, the outworks of Pardaleras and Picurina much strengthened, and a great portion of the ditch filled by the inundation of the Rivellas, which was easy of accomplishment by means of the sluice at San Roque.

The point of attack which his lordship decided upon, notwithstanding the advantages which were on the side of the enemy, was quite at variance with that of the preceding year, so it must be naturally presumed that the former was found to be faulty. Then, the outworks were by no means so formidable as now on the side about to be assailed, while, on the other side, the scene of the former attack, little progress had been made towards its amelioration. At the same time the siege was undertaken in 1811, it was urged by the Engineers that the fortifications on the side of the castle were confined to a single wall; that the interior of the castle was commanded by the fort of San Christoval on the right bank of the river; and that, once in possession of the fort, we could as completely command the castle as it did the remainder of the works of the fortress, or, in other words, that all resistance on the part of the enemy must be futile. The attack against San Christoval the preceding year failed, it is true, but why it failed has been already told.

From what I have written, it will be seen that the town of Badajoz was deemed a prize worthy of contention; that Lord Wellington had left nothing undone, as far as in him lay, to ensure success, and that the enemy, on his part, had been far from inactive. Our battering train, as compared with the former siege, was formidable indeed, but nevertheless the entire number of guns did not exceed forty—of the best description, no doubt, being metal guns of the largest calibre—while the batteries, on the enemy's side, counted more than three times that number, without

taking into account the cannon he had at his disposal to succour his batteries, as they might require such aid, by placing his guns *en barbette*, or in any other way that might best suit his purpose. To reduce a town so circumstanced, supposing every requisite means existed, would have occupied more time than could, under existing circumstances, be spared; because the Duke of Dalmatia might readily assemble forty thousand men, while the Duke of Ragusa, with an equal force, could co-operate with him; and if, by a protracted affair, Badajoz was not carried before the junction of those two armies, it was clear that we must give it up altogether, or encounter an army more than double our own numbers, and in a country, too, decidedly favourable for cavalry, in which arm the French had a vast superiority. Lord Wellington, therefore, resolved to hazard the trial, which, all things considered, offered a fair chance of success, and decided, after a minute examination of its defences, to attack Badajoz on the side of the fort of Picurina, from which point the part of the wall that embraced the bastions of Santa Maria and La Trinidad could be seen across the inundation.

The evening of the 17th of March had scarcely closed, when three thousand men broke ground before La Picurina, at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards. The night was unusually dark, the wind was high, and the rain fell in torrents—all of which favoured the enterprise. The soldiers, accustomed to fatigues, and knowing by experience, if for nothing but their own safety, the necessity of getting on rapidly with their work, exerted themselves to their utmost, and when the grey dawn of morning made its appearance, the enemy beheld, with surprise, through the mist that surrounded them, the first parallel of our works completed, without their having anticipated it,

or having thrown one shot in the direction of our workmen; but as the fog cleared away, it was too palpable to be misunderstood, that, despite of the sagacity of General Count Phillipon and his devoted garrison, a line of circumvallation had been cut close to one of the best of his outworks, without his having the remotest idea of the attempt. The different alarm-bells in the town rang a loud peal, and in less than half an hour a tremendous cannonade was opened upon us, from the guns of the fort, as well as the town itself. Some men were killed, and several wounded, but, excepting this, no loss was sustained; the works were uninjured, their progress unimpeded, and this, our first attempt, for the third time, was crowned with that unlooked-for success which was a good omen for the future.

The entire of the 18th, the rain continued to fall, and the trenches were already nearly knee-deep with water, but by the great exertions of the engineers, and the persevering resolution of the soldiers, the works were pushed on with extraordinary vigour, the earth not being as yet sufficiently saturated to lose its consistency. 'On the night of the 18th, it rained still more heavily; nevertheless some guns were dragged through the slough by the soldiers into the batteries marked out to act against La Picurina, and the following morning the works were in that forward state as to cause the French governor much alarm for the fate of this outwork. Towards mid-day on the 19th, a dense vapour, issuing from the Guadiana and Rivellas, caused by the heavy rains that had fallen, made Phillipon consider the moment a favourable one to make a rush into our works; he accordingly placed two thousand chosen troops at the different gates and sally-ports with fixed bayonets, ready to storm the batteries at a given signal. At this time our soldiers were working in the trenches, nearly up to their hips

in water; the covering party were too distant to afford immediate relief if required to do so, because they were kept out of the wet ground as far as was consistent with the safety of our lines; and the soldiers that composed the working party were in a helpless and defenceless state, their arms and appointments being thrown aside.

I happened to be in the works on this day, and having a little more experience than the officer who commanded the party, I observed with distrust the bustle which was apparent, not only in the fort of Picurina, but also along the ramparts of the town. Without waiting the formality of telling the commanding officer what I thought, I, on the instant, ordered the men to throw by their spades and shovels, put on their appointments, and load their firelocks. This did not occupy more than three minutes, and in a few seconds afterwards the entire trenches to our right were filled with Frenchmen, the workmen massacred, and the works materially damaged; while at the same moment, several hundred men attempted to throw themselves into the battery we occupied: but the workmen were armed and ready to receive them; they had just been placed—I must say it, for it is the truth—by me, in a posture not only to save their own lives, but the battery also. The Frenchmen advanced with that impetuous burst so well known to those who have witnessed it, and so difficult to stand before by any. They had a double motive to urge them on on this occasion, honour had a forcible auxiliary in the shape of a dollar, which they were to receive for every pick-axe or shovel they carried out of our trenches, and well as I know the French character, it is difficult for me to say which of the two, honour or avarice, most predominated upon the present occasion; I shall only say that it is my firm conviction—and I judge from the

spirit of the attack, that both had their share in stimulating those heroic and veteran plundérers to seek for a footing within our trenches, for I never saw a set of fellows that sought with greater avidity than they did, the spades and shovels that were thrown aside by our men. Lieutenant D'Arcy of the 88th and Lieutenant White of the 45th pursued them almost to the glacis of the town; and had the movement been foreseen, there can be little hazard in saying, that, with a sufficient supply of ladders at the moment, the fort of Picurina could have been carried by the workmen alone, so great was their enthusiasm, with a less loss of lives than it cost us (after six days labour) on the 25th!

The sortie had been well repulsed at this point, but higher up, on the right, we were not so fortunate: the workmen were surprised, and, in addition to the injury inflicted upon the works, a great loss of men and officers was sustained before the covering party reached the spot. General Picton soon after arrived in the battery where I was stationed, and seemed to be much alarmed for its safety, not knowing, in the confusion of the moment, which was great, that the enemy had attacked it, and had been driven back; but when he learned from me, that the workmen alone had achieved this act, he was lavish in his praise of them, and spoke to myself—for him—in flattering terms; but there was an austerity of demeanour, which, even while he gave praise,—a thing he seldom did of the Connaught Rangers at least!—kept a fast hold of him, and the caustic sententiousness with which he spoke rather chilled than animated. He was on foot, but his aide-de-camp, Captain Cuthbert of the Fusileers, was mounted, and while in the act of giving directions to some of the troops, (for by this time the whole of the besieging force, attracted by the cannonade, was in

motion towards the works,) he was struck in the hip by a round shot, which killed his horse on the spot, leaving him dreadfully mangled and bleeding to death. This officer was a serious loss to Picton, and was much regretted by the division; he possessed all the requisites for a staff-officer, without that silly arrogance—the sure sign of an empty mind, as well as head—which we sometimes meet with amongst the gentlemen who composed the *état major* of our army.

We lost in this affair about two hundred men, many of whom were cut down in the works, and several in the depôts far in the rear, by a body of the enemy's light cavalry that galloped out of the town at the moment the sortie commenced. Absurd as this may read, it is nevertheless true: the garrison of Badajoz, cooped up within its walls, without a foot of ground that they could call their own beyond the glacis, and, in a manner, begirt by an army of fifty thousand men, were—by their admirable arrangement of their forces, or by the superlative neglect of our people, enabled to ride through our lines—unopposed by a single dragoon!—from right to left! Brilliant, however, as was this exploit, it was of no such service to the garrison: their loss exceeded four hundred men, and the capture of a few dozen spades and shovels but ill repaid them for so great a sacrifice of lives, at any time valuable, but in their present position, doubly so.

The sortie being at length repulsed, and order once more restored, the works in the trenches were continued under a torrent of rain and fire of artillery. Lieutenant White, of the 45th, who had been much distinguished in the batteries, was struck by a shell, (without a fuse,) on the head, which killed him on the spot; he was reading a book at the moment, and Lieutenant Cotton, of the 88th, who was sitting beside him, was so covered with his blood, that it was thought at first he had been frightfully wounded.

Up to this time the fall of rain had been so violent as to threaten the total failure of the operation; it had never ceased since the 17th, and the trenches were a perfect river; the soldiers were working up to their knees in water, and the fatigue and hardships they endured were great indeed, but there was no complaint—not even a murmur to be heard! and Lord Wellington might be seen in the midst of his soldiers, sometimes with his beard unshaven. Those,—ignorant people I admit, and quite unworthy of any rational persons taking the trouble to reply to their fooleries—who have the presumption to call Lord Wellington "a General of Fortune," had they seen him, as thousands of his companions have, at this same siege, worn down with fatigue of body and mind, giving himself up wholly to an operation of such momentous consequence, not to his own country alone, but to Europe generally,—had those persons, I say, seen him then, it is to be hoped, for their own sakes at least—for such creatures can have no national feeling—that they would not give their tongues the license they do. Poor ignorant idiots! The fame of this great man—this first of generals—is too firmly established to be blighted by their slanders, and will, despite of factious renegades, be handed down to posterity, so long as an Englishman—worthy of the name—shall be found on the face of the earth.

The next day, the 22nd, the pontoon bridge over the Guadiana was carried away by the floods which the late rains had caused in the river, and the stream became so rapid that the flying bridges could not be made use of, and, in short, all supplies from the other side were cut off. In the trenches, matters were in as bad a state, for the earth no longer retained its consistency, and it was impossible to get it into any shape. On the 24th, however, the weather happily settled fine, and much progress was made towards forwarding

the works; but this, and the following day, were perhaps two of the most dreadful recorded in the annals of sieges. The soldiers laboured with a degree of hardihood, bordering on desperation, while the engineers braved every danger with as much composure as if they either set no value upon their lives, or thought their bodies impregnable to shot or shell. In proportion as our works advanced, the enemy redoubled his fire, and the attempt made by us to drag the heavy guns through the mud, or to form magazines for the gunpowder, was almost certain death; but not content with the destruction which his fire carried throughout our ranks, Phillipon brought to his aid a battery from San Christoval, which he placed close to the edge of the river; the fire of this battery completely enfiladed our works, and rendered it difficult and hazardous for the workmen to keep their ground.

Half a battalion was ordered down to the water's edge, and the effect of their fire against these guns was soon appreciated by the soldiers in the batteries; the cannonade of the enemy lost its effect, their fire became irregular, their shot passed over our heads, and finally they were compelled to limber up their park of artillery, and retrace their steps, at a gallop, up the Christoval height. Nevertheless, this battery did an incalculable hurt to us; many men were struck down by its fire, but, above all, our engineers suffered the most. This was a loss that could be but ill spared, for we were so scantily supplied with this description of force, that it was found necessary to substitute officers of the infantry to act as such during the siege. These officers were very zealous in the performance of the dangerous duties they had to fulfil: some had a tolerable knowledge of the theory, but none, if I except Major Thompson of the 74th, and one or two that had served at Rodrigo, knew anything of the practical part; they strove, however, by great

intrepidity, to make up for their other defects; they exposed themselves to every danger, with a bravery bordering on fool-hardihood, and consequently, under such a fire as we were exposed to, scarcely one escaped death. Lieutenant Fairtlough of the 5th, and Rammage of the 74th, both acting engineers, were cut asunder by a round shot from the San Christoval battery; others, whose names I forget, shared the same fate, and several were wounded.

Towards three o'clock in the afternoon our works had been materially advanced, several small magazines were in progress, the batteries destined to act against La Picurina were armed, and the losses which we sustained amongst our engineers repaired by the arrival of others to replace their fallen companions. It was at this time, while I was seriously occupied with thirty men, in covering with boards and sand-bags a magazine which had been, with great labour, formed during the forenoon, that a shell of huge dimensions exploded at the entrance of it. There were, at the moment, above a dozen or so of the Staff Corps and engineers, with some of the line, placing a quantity of gunpowder in the vault which had been prepared to receive it. The roof of the magazine was, in defiance of the dreadful fire which was incessant upon this point, crowned by a few soldiers of the party under my command; some kegs of gunpowder, which were at the entrance of the cave, unfortunately blew up, destroying all at that side of the magazine, and hurling the planks which were but in part secured upon its top, together with the men that were upon them, into the air, caused us a great loss of lives and labour, but fortunately the great store of powder which was inside, escaped. The planks were shivered to pieces, and the brave fellows who occupied them, either blown into atoms, or so dreadfully wounded as to cause their immediate death; some had their

uniforms burned to a cinder, while others were coiled up in a heap, without the vestige of anything left to denote that they were human beings.

An 88th soldier, of the name of Cooney, barber to the company he belonged to, escaped the effects of the explosion, unhurt, except a slight scratch in the face, caused by a splinter from a rock that had been rent in pieces by the blowing up of the magazine; he was an old and ugly man, but yet so vain of his personal appearance, as to be nearly in despair at the idea, as he said, "of his good looks being spoiled." While he was in the midst of his lamentation, a round shot struck his head and carried it off his shoulders, when one of his companions exclaimed, with that humour which none but an Irishman could possess at such a time, "Well! upon my sowl, he was always an ugly-looking cratur, but now he's the very devil!" all the men laughed, and said, "It was thrue for him he was." In his coat pocket was found his soap and razor, which were instantly drawn lots for, but to whose "lot" they fell I know not. Those—ill-timed, some will say—jokes, may appear to many, out of place, but they are not so nevertheless; it is much better that soldiers while enduring fatigues, and braving dangers such as those I am describing, should have a light and cheerful bearing, and it is plain that he who passes his joke in this manner against his fallen comrade stands a fair chance of being similarly placed himself, without any risk of his taking offence at it. It is this gaiety of demeanour—this steel-hardiness in moments of peril—that makes soldiers, in the true acceptation of the word, what they ought to be. No matter what a man's feelings may really be, he should, and must stifle them, because it is well known—at least to those who have seen service—how readily the opinions of a few act upon the great mass of the multitude; and if soldiers

were to indulge themselves in mourning over the dead bodies of their fallen companions, it would act like a contagion, and it would be difficult to say how the great body might be infected by it.

The Duke of Wellington was never known to pay attention to the reports carried to him of the fall of any of his officers: no more was Nelson. At Trafalgar, when his ship, the Victory, was along side of the Spanish Santissima Trinidada, one of the first discharges from that mountain of floating timber killed eight men on the quarter-deck. Nelson quietly turned round to his Captain, and said, "This is too good to last long." Yet Nelson was a man of such humanity, and tenderness of feeling, that he was never known to remain on board of his ship when a sailor was to be punished; and at Waterloo, it is affirmed by French officers, and more than hinted at in the bulletin detailing that battle, that the cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" raised by a few obscure individuals, was the cause of its loss to the French army. However, averse as I am to such conduct, I will not—although not a "Waterloo man"—go the length that my French acquaintances have done, because I verily believe that, at the time the cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" was raised at Waterloo, it was just about the same service to the Imperial army as the warning given by a Lisbon *femme de chambre* when she has discharged the contents of a certain machine, that shall be nameless, upon the head of some ill-fated passenger—or, to speak more plainly, when the advice came too late.

The French cannoniers were loud in cheering when they discovered the effects of their fire upon Cooney's sconce; our men cheered in turn, and continued to crown the top of the already half-dismantled magazine, but as fast as they mounted it, they were swept off its face by the overwhelming fire from the town: yet notwithstanding the great loss of lives that had

already taken place, and the almost certain death which awaited all who attempted to remain on the magazine, it was never for five minutes unoccupied, and by four o'clock in the afternoon it might be said to be perfectly finished. Baffled in his endeavours to stop our progress, Phillipon was determined to make it cost us as dear as he could. Twelve additional guns were brought from the unemployed batteries and placed along the curtain *en barbette*. These, at half-range distance, without the means on our side to reply to them, were fired with a fearful precision; it was next to impossible to stand under it, but the soldiers, on this day, surpassed all their former efforts. The fire of three score pieces of artillery was employed in vain against them; the works were repaired so soon as injured, and everything warranted the opinion, that, should the night prove fine, our batteries would open the following day.

Captain Mulcaster, of the Engineers, by his heroic conduct, stimulated the soldiers wonderfully; no danger could unnerve him, or prevent his exposing himself to the hottest of the French fire, and for a time he escaped unhurt, but at length, while standing on a rising ground, in front of the battery No. 1, a twenty-four pound shot struck him in the neck, and carried away his head and part of his back and shoulders. The headless trunk was knocked several yards from the spot, but was speedily carried to the engineer camp by some of the brave men who, but a few short moments before, looked upon what was now an inanimate lump of clay, with that admiration naturally inspired by one of the finest, as well as the most intrepid young men in the army; for he had endeared himself to the soldiers as much by his kind manner to them, as by his total disregard of danger to himself. It is well known that infantry soldiers had a great dislike to being placed under the control of the engi-

neer officers, who exacted, or at least they thought so, too much from them, but Captain Mulcaster had a manner, peculiar to himself, that gained him the good will of all.

Major Thomson of the 88th, soon after fell. He was observing a party of the enemy who were rowing a *bateau* across the inundation of the Rivellas with a reinforcement of men intended to succour the troops that occupied the ravelin of San Roque. This operation, although embracing but a small portion of the garrison, was one of a very delicate nature, inasmuch as the distance between our works, and the inundation, was so short as to enable us to command with musketry its entire span; but the Governor, ever ready in strategy, provided against even this chance of his plans for defence being marred. He caused to be constructed a large *bateau*, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, a raft. The side of it which faced our lines was raised by light poles to the height of four feet, through which were intertwined wattles of osier; by this means, a support sufficiently strong, without being too cumbrous to impede the movement of the raft, was completed, and the inside was carefully padded with hay, or such light matter, as was a sufficient defence against musket without any danger of the machine's losing its centre of gravity. To stop as much as possible this operation, several hundred riflemen were placed in advance, and so soon as the machine was discovered in motion on the water, a heavy fire was opened; a corresponding demonstration was made by the enemy, sustained by several batteries, and those mutual efforts were always productive of a heavy loss of lives on both sides, but particularly on ours, because the enemy's line of musketry commanded us at a distance of three hundred and fifty yards, and up to this time we had not one gun to answer their powerful salvos.

Major Thomson, who was in command of the riflemen, was in conversation with an aide-du-camp belonging to the staff of Marshal Beresford at the moment he fell; a musket ball struck him in the right temple, and passing through the brain, killed him on the spot. He had been but just *Gazetted* to his majority, by purchase, and had served with the army from the campaign in Holland in 1794, to the moment of his death, without ever having been absent from his regiment in any of the battles in which it had been engaged, a few of which have been recorded by me. Captain Seton, an officer of precisely the same standing and services, succeeded him in the command of the 88th, and led his regiment up the ladders on the night of the storming of Badajoz, but he gained no promotion, except in his regular turn! and he was the *only* commanding officer of a battalion in the third division that did not get a brevet step.

Near the spot where Thomson fell, an officer of his regiment named North met his death, and, as it was one of great singularity, I shall notice it out of the many that occurred on this fatal day. He was struck in the cheek by a round-shot; the under part of his face and a portion of his throat were carried away, leaving the upper part perfect, which hung down in a hideous flap like a deformed mask. He was carried to the hospital, where I saw him two days afterwards, not only alive but sitting upright against a wall; he was perfectly sane, and recognized my voice; he endeavoured to speak to me, but the effort he made inexpressibly shocked me. The voice, in place of issuing from its natural channel, the mouth, but mouth there was none, came spectre-like from the chest, and more resembled the howling of some wild animal than the voice of man. He did not survive the night, and died after a violent effort of nature to sustain life, which he had done for more than fifty

hours, giving a proof of the awful capability of suffering that exists in our frame, and faithfully bearing out the writer who says that "many are the shapes of death, and many are the ways that lead to his grim cave—all dreadful."

The evening of a day—never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it—at length began to close; the shades of night soon rendered our lines invisible to the enemy, and under its cover, the men who had been at work for so many hours were withdrawn to the camp; two thousand fresh soldiers replaced them and carried on the duty in the trenches until the dawn of morning, at which time they presented a formidable appearance. Two batteries of thirty-two pounders were unmasked at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards from La Picurina, and ere the sun was clearly distinguishable on the horizon, a violent cannonade commenced against that outwork. It was replied to with vigour, not only from the fort itself, but the batteries of the town also. On this day I was attached to the engineers; but the fatigues I had undergone the preceding one, caused me to sleep soundly, and in truth I had great need of repose, so it was late ere I proceeded to the engineer camp to report myself to Colonel Fletcher, the commanding officer. On my way thither I was much amused by a dialogue which took place between a soldier of the light division, one of the 43rd I think, an Englishman, and a young man who afterwards turned out to be a commissary's clerk —for many of those men who afterwards made such sums of money, and some of them who became so intolerably presuming as to cut their old acquaintances, came out to the Peninsula in this character. The young clerk was attached to the light division, and wished to know from the soldier (whom he recognized by his uniform as belonging to it) whither he was to bend his steps in order to find it. I shall give the

conversation word for word, as nearly as I can now recollect after so great a lapse of time.

Com. "Pray, my good fellow, don't you belong to the light division?"

Sol. "No, sir, I belong to *the* division."

Com. "Why what division is that? I never heard of it before.

Sol. "Have you been long with the army, sir?"

Com. "I have only this morning joined it."

Sol. "I thought so!"

Com. "Why what has that to do with my question?"

Sol. "As you seem to be but a young hand—or as we call it in this here army—a green horn—I'll just tell you all about it. This here army is composed of seven divisions, and I'll tell you all about 'em and their names—at least the names that we, soldiers, have given them. Ours is called *the* division, because as how we think ourselves the crack one. Then there's the first division; those we call the gentlemen, because they are made up of Guardsmen and Germans, and his Majesty (God bless him!) is fond of his body-guard, and likes to have good care 'taken of them; and the Germans he likes as well as the Guards, because they say his own mother was a German bred and born. These chaps have the snuggest berth in the army. The second division is a corps of observation like, we never see 'em, though we sometimes hear about 'em. The third is the *fighting* division—and the fourth would fight if they were axed! The fifth come up to a town after we have taken it, and are useful enough. The sixth are scattered over the country, here and there, and the seventh are trying to get them together; and this is the way the army is divided in this here Island."

"Why truly, my friend," replied the commissary, "your description is amusing enough; but as I have nothing to do with the fighting merits of the army, it

does not concern me. In a word, I am a commissary, and wish to know where I am to find your division, to which I am attached." "A commissary are you? why then bless your stars that you did not join *the* division when the brave Bob Crawfurd—black Bob we used to call him—commanded it; it was he as knowed how to whop a thieving commissary! Why look ye, sir, I knowed him once myself to throw one of them 'ere chaps neck and shoulders out of a winder, and it is said, though I don't know it for sartin, that he whopped another in such prime style, the poor cratur ever after looked so *promiscuously*,* I may say, when he met Bob, that he quitted *the* division, and went—if all as was said of him be true—to the devil, and when he went to him, it must have been a great release to the poor soul, for black Bob was worse than the devil himself for sarving out a commissary."

The young man took his departure in the direction of the light division camp, and if his looks were a criterion to go by, he, most unquestionably, was not of the number that mourned Crawfurd's death.

Towards evening the fire against La Picurina was so effective, that Lord Wellington resolved to storm it after dark.

* I suppose the soldier meant "confused."

CHAPTER XIX.

State of the enemy's fort La Picurina from our fire—Attempt to storm it—Desperate defence of the garrison—It is carried by assault—Preparations for the grand attack—Frightful difficulties of the enterprise—The attack and defence—Slaughter of the besiegers—Badajoz taken.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon of the 25th of March, almost all its batteries on the side of our lines were disorganized, its palisades beaten down, and the fort itself, having more the semblance of a wreck than a fortification of any pretensions, presented to the eye nothing but a heap of ruins; but never was there a more fallacious appearance: the work although dismantled of its cannon, its parapets crumbling to pieces at each successive discharge from our guns, and its garrison diminished, without a chance of being succoured, was still much more formidable than appeared to the eye of a superficial observer. It had yet many means of resistance at its disposal. The gorge, protected by three rows of palisades, was still unhurt; and although several feet of the scarp had been thrown down by the fire from our battering-park, it was, notwithstanding, of a height sufficient to inspire its garrison with a well-grounded confidence as to the result

of any effort of ours against it; it was defended by three hundred of the *élite* of Phillipon's force, under the command of a Colonel of Soult's staff, named Gaspard Thiery, who volunteered his services on the occasion. On this day a deserter came over to us from the fort, and gave an exact account of how it was circumstanced.

Colonel Fletcher, the chief engineer, having carefully examined the damage created by our fire, disregarding the perfect state of many of the defences, and being well aware that expedition was of paramount import to our final success, advised that the fort should be attacked after nightfall. Five hundred men of Picton's division, who on this day did the duty in the trenches, were ordered to hold themselves in readiness for the assault—eight o'clock was the hour named. At seven the men were arrayed in order, and divided into three detachments of equal proportions; the right column was intrusted to Major Shawe of the 74th; the centre to Captain Powis of the 83rd; and the left to Major Rudd of the 77th—all, officers as well as privates, belonging to the third division. And here I am forced to digress so far as to say, that the officer of the light division who wrote the "Sketch of the Storming of Badajoz," is in error when he says that a part of his corps formed any of those that carried the fort of La Picurina. If such was the case, it is not—at least that I have read—so recorded, except by himself! I was on the spot—was personally acquainted with the greater part of the officers, and, I might add—privates; I did not see one man of the light division amongst the troops destined for the attack, nor do I think—so far as my recollection directs me—that Lord Wellington, in his account of that affair, says that the light division bore any part in it. The third division, although never defeated, cannot spare any portion of their hard-earned fame to another; and the gallant light division stand

in no need of an auxiliary to commemorate their imperishable deeds in the Peninsula.

At half-past seven o'clock the storming party, consisting of fifteen officers and five hundred privates, stood to their arms. General Kempt, who commanded in the trenches, explained to them the duty they had to perform; he did so in his usual clear manner, and every one knew the part he was to fulfil. All now waited with anxiety for the expected signal, which was to be the fire of one gun from No. 4 battery. The evening was settled and calm; no rain had fallen since the 23rd; the rustling of a leaf might be heard; and the silence of the moment was uninterrupted, except by the French sentinels, as they challenged while pacing the battlements of the outwork; the answers of their comrades, although in a lower tone of voice, were distinguishable, "*Tout va bien dans le fort de la Picurina*," was heard by the very men who only awaited the signal from a gun to prove, that the *réponse*, although true to the letter, might soon be falsified.

The great cathedral bell of the city at length tolled the hour of eight, and its last sounds had scarcely died away when the signal from the battery summoned the men to their perilous task;—the three detachments sprang out of the works at the same moment, and ran forwards to the glacis; but the great noise which the evolution unavoidably created gave warning to the enemy, already on the alert, and a violent fire of musketry opened upon the assailing columns. One hundred men fell before they reached the outwork; but the rest, undismayed by the loss, and unshaken in their purpose, threw themselves into the ditch, or against the palisades at the gorge. The sappers, armed with axes and crow-bars, attempted to cut away or force down this defence; but the palisades were of such thickness, and so firmly placed in the ground, that before any impression could be made against even the front row,

nearly all the men who had crowded to this point were struck dead. Meanwhile, those in charge of the ladders flung them into the ditch, and those below soon placed them upright against the wall; but in some instances they were not of a sufficient length to reach the top of the parapet. The time was passing rapidly, and had been awfully occupied by the enemy; while as yet our troops had not made any progress that could warrant a hope of success. More than two-thirds of the officers and privates were killed or wounded; two out of the three that commanded detachments had fallen; and Major Shawe, of the 74th, was the only one unhurt. All his ladders were too short—his men, either in the ditch or on the glacis, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, and not knowing what to do, became bewildered—the French cheered vehemently, and each discharge swept away many officers and privates.

Shawe's situation, which had always been one of peril, now became desperate; he called out to his next senior officer (Captain Oates, of the 88th), and said, "Oates, what are we to do?" but at the instant he was struck in the neck by a bullet, and fell bathed in blood. It immediately occurred to Oates, who now took the command, that although the ladders were too short to mount the wall, they were long enough to go across the ditch! He at once formed the desperate resolution of throwing three of them over the fosse, by which a sort of bridge was constructed; he led the way, followed by the few of his brave soldiers who were unhurt, and, forcing their passage through an embrasure that had been but bolstered up in the hurry of the moment, carried—after a brief, desperate, but decisive conflict—the point allotted to him. Sixty grenadiers of the Italian guard were the first encountered by Oates and his party; they supplicated for mercy, but, either by accident or design, one of them discharged his firelock, and the ball struck Oates in the thigh; he

fell, and his men, who had before been greatly excited, now became furious when they beheld their commanding officer weltering in his blood. Every man of the Italian guard was put to death on the spot.

Meanwhile Captain Powis's detachment had made great progress, and finally entered the fort by the salient angle. It has been said, and, for aught I know to the contrary, with truth, that it was the first which established itself in the outwork; but this is of little import in the detail, or to the reader. All the troops engaged acted with the same spirit and devotion, and each vied with his comrade to keep up the character of the "fighting division." Almost the entire of the privates and non-commissioned officers were killed or wounded; and of fifteen officers, which constituted the number of those engaged, not one escaped unhurt! Major Rudd's detachment, as also the one commanded by Captain Powis, were composed of soldiers belonging to the different regiments of Picton's division; but that commanded by Major Shawe were, to a man, Connaught Rangers. Of the garrison, but few escaped; the Commandant, and about eighty, were made prisoners; the rest, in endeavouring to escape under the guns of the fortress, or to shelter themselves in San Roque, were either bayoneted or drowned in the Rivellas; but this was not owing to any mismanagement on the part of Count Phillipon. He, with that thorough knowledge of his duty which marked his conduct throughout the siege, had, early in the business, ordered a body of chosen troops to *débouche* from San Roque, and to hold themselves in readiness to sustain the fort; but the movement was foreseen. A strong column, which had been placed in reserve, under the command of Captain Lindsey, of the 88th, met this reinforcement at the moment they were about to sustain their defeated companions at La Picurina. Not expecting to be thus attacked, these troops became

panic-struck, soon fled in disorder, and running, without heed, in every direction, choked up the only passage of escape that was open for the fugitives from the outwork, and by a well-meant, but ill-executed evolution, did more harm than good.

So soon as the result of this last effort to succour the fort was apparent to Phillipon, he caused a violent cannonade to be opened against it, but it was not of long duration; and our engineers, profiting by the quiet which reigned throughout the enemy's batteries, pushed forward the second parallel with great success. A corps of sappers, under my command, were charged with the work of dismantling the fort, and before day we had nearly completed its destruction.

Amongst the officers who fell on this evening, independent of those immediately belonging to the storming party, were two who were much regretted: the major of our brigade, Captain Wilde, of the 87th, and Lieutenant George Johnston, of the 88th. This latter officer was not on duty in the works; but when it was made known to him that his Captain (Oates) was to take a part in the fray, he ran down to join his friend, and—with his arm in a sling, and an unhealed wound which he received on the breast at Rodrigo—fell, with many others, in endeavouring to force the gorge of the fort. It was he who so much distinguished himself at the battle of Fuentes d'Onore, when his regiment (the 88th) overthrew the French Imperial Guard.

Thus terminated the siege and storming of La Picurina, after a lapse of eight nights and nine days of unprecedented labour and peril. It might be said that its capture opened to us the gates of Badajoz, or at all events put the key of that fortress into our hands; it nevertheless cost us some trouble before we could make use of the key so gained. Never, from the commencement of the war until its termination, was there a more gallant exploit than the storming of this

outwork; and it may be well here to analyze the description of force by which so difficult an affair was achieved, as likewise the rank of the officers who conducted the attack. I know it is the fashion with some to think, or say, at all events, that in an affair of the kind, a body of chosen, or, as the phrase goes, "picked" men should be employed, and none others. Now what is meant by "picked men?" Why, neither more nor less than stout-looking fellows. This is folly—perfect folly. There may be some, sticklers for this, their hobby, who will say, "Oh no! not stout big fellows, but men of good character." Greater folly again. Others may say, "Well, at all events, such duties ought to be performed by grenadiers or light infantry, and under the command of a general officer." This is greater folly than both the others put together. Such opinions are, and I speak from experience, fallacious. It is well known that a man of six feet is not more capable of enduring fatigue than a short stout-built fellow of five feet six; and, if the heart be in the right place, the little man will be as efficient in the breach as his gigantic comrade. As to good characters, we have, all of us seen the most profligate fellows in a regiment die like heroes at the muzzle of a gun; and as to grenadiers and light infantry, experience has shown that they have been defeated, although headed by generals, when, as in the case of La Picurina, the men who happened to be on duty of Picton's division, commanded by a Major and two Captains, achieved an exploit that stands unrivalled in the Peninsular campaigns. The three officers who commanded detachments gained a step in consequence; but the brave Captain Oates,—who so chivalrously planted his ladders across the ditch, and who succeeded to the command of Major Shawe's detachment after that officer was wounded,—so far from being recommended for a brevet-step, although he was a Captain

of nine years' standing, was not even *noticed* by General Picton (the General of his division) for his gallant conduct!

From this period until the 30th, a heavy fire was kept up against the works of the place; but it would be uninteresting to the reader to enter into a detail of all the *minutiæ* of our operations during this time. On the night of the 29th, the enemy attacked the troops posted on the right bank of the Guadiana, but their efforts were vain, and they were repulsed with loss.

While these events were taking place before Badajoz, the remainder of the army, under Generals Hill and Graham, were pushed in advance on the Seville road. Hill occupied Merida with two divisions; while Graham, stationed at Santa Martha, observed the movements of the French Andalusian army under Drouet.

On the 30th of March, two breaching-batteries, armed with twenty-six guns of heavy calibre, and of the very best description, opened their fire to batter down the face of the two bastions already named; and, notwithstanding every effort which the powerful resources of the enemy enabled him to command, it was abundantly manifest that a few days would suffice to finish the labours of the army before Badajoz.

All this time Soult was making the greatest exertions to get together a sufficient force for the succour of the garrison; but he miscalculated the *time* necessary for such an effort; and the fine defence of Count Phillipon the preceding year, together with the efficient state of the place, inspired him with a confidence that was fatal. So late as the 1st of April he was at Seville, seven days' march from Villa Franca, and nine from Badajoz! He had early apprized Marmont of the events that were passing; but that Marshal, instead of seriously occupying himself in making use of the means at his disposal to succour his friend, allowed himself to be occupied in a petty warfare against the

militia of Portugal, and when he had trifled a few days in this manner, he re-crossed the Agueda, after having frittered away five precious days in folly, and left the city of Badajoz, which was of such vital importance, and the army of his brother Marshal, to their fate. Thus, with a force of little more than forty thousand men (including the army of observation,) Lord Wellington took the place, as it were, in presence of two French armies, amounting together to upwards of eighty thousand of the veterans of France. This was pretty well for a Sepoy General, as the *Moniteur* styled him, or, as the renegades in England called him,—a lucky General.

The breaching-batteries, which opened their fire on the 30th, were effective beyond our expectations against the works, and the sappers had made considerable progress towards completing a good covert-way for the troops to *débouche* from in their attack of the breaches. On the 25th, thirty-two sappers were placed under my command, but on the night of the 4th of April, their numbers were reduced to seven. I lost some of the bravest men I ever commanded; but, considering the perils they encountered, it is only surprising how any escaped: we were frequently obliged to run the flying-sap so close to the battlements of the town, that the noise of the pick-axes was heard on the ramparts, and, upon such occasions, the party were almost invariably cut off to a man. But it was then that the courage of the brave fellows under my orders showed itself superior to any reverse, and what was wanted in force, was made up by the most heroic bravery of individuals. There were three men of my own regiment, Williamson, Bray, and Macgowan, and I feel happy in being able to mention the names of those heroes: when a fire, so destructive as to sweep away all our gabions, took place, those men would run forward with a fresh supply, and, under

a fire in which it was almost impossible to live, place them in order, for the rest of the party to shelter themselves, while they threw up a sufficiency of earth to render them proof against musketry. This dangerous duty was carried on for eleven successive nights, that is to say, from the 25th of March to the 5th of April.

On this day, the batteries of the enemy were nearly crippled, and their replies to our fire scarcely audible; the spirits of the soldiers, which no fatigue could damp, rose to a frightful height—I say frightful, because it was not of that sort which alone denoted exultation at the prospect of their achieving an exploit which was about to hold them up to the admiration of the world, there was a certain *something* in their bearing that told plainly they had suffered fatigues, which, though they did not complain of, and had seen their comrades and officers slain while fighting beside them without repining,—they smarted under the one, and felt acutely for the other, yet smothered both, so long as their minds and bodies were employed: now, however, that they had a momentary licence to *think*, every fine feeling vanished, and plunder and revenge took their place. Their labours, up to this period, although unremitting, and carried on with a cheerfulness that was astonishing, hardly promised the success which they looked for; and the change which the last twenty-four hours had wrought in their favour, caused a material alteration in their demeanour; they hailed the present prospect as the mariner does the disappearance of a heavy cloud after a storm, which discovers to his view the clear horizon. In a word, the capture of Badajoz had long been their idol; many causes led to this wish on their part; the two previous unsuccessful sieges, and the failure of the attack against San Christoval in the latter; but, above all, the well-known hostility of its inhabitants to the British army,

and perhaps might be added, a desire for plunder, which the sacking of Rodrigo had given them a taste for. Badajoz was, therefore denounced as a place to be made an example of; and, most unquestionably, no city, Jerusalem excepted, was ever more strictly visited to the letter than was this ill-fated town.

The soldiers had, from some cause or other, perhaps from the disabled appearance of the bastions near the breaches, conceived the idea that the storm was to take place on the night of the 5th: they accordingly began to make such arrangements as they fancied suitable to the occasion; some by a distribution of their little effects amongst their immediate friends, others bequeathed their arrears of pay to those whom they fancied, or upon receiving a similar pledge from any soldier who felt disposed to make a like barter. Their minds being thus made up for an event which was destined to be the grave of so many, they awaited, with ill-suppressed impatience, in groups, for the order which was to summon them to the assault; a little rain had fallen, and there is something, even in a shower, extremely composing to the spirits. A quiet calm settles over the mind; every straggling thought is called in; by-gone scenes revisit the mind; and it is not long before this stagnant gloom of the intellect is dispersed by a mental monsoon.

The demeanour of the soldiers on this evening faithfully exemplified what I have just written: a quiet but desperate calm had taken the place of that gayness and buoyancy of spirits which they possessed so short a time before, and nothing now was observable in their manner but a tiger-like expression of anxiety to seize upon their prey, which they considered as already within their grasp.

Towards five o'clock in the afternoon, all doubts were at an end, in consequence of some officers arriving in the camp from the trenches: they reported that

Lord Wellington had decided upon breaching the curtain that connected the bastion of La Trinidad and Santa Maria, and as this operation would necessarily occupy several hours' fire, it was impossible that the assault could take place before the following day, the 6th, and the inactivity that reigned in the engineer camp, which contained the scaling-ladders, was corroborative of the intelligence. For once I saw the men dejected; yet it was not the dejection of fear, but of disappointment. Some of the most impetuous broke out into violent and unbecoming language; others abused the engineers; and many threw the blame of the delay upon the Generals who commanded in the trenches; but all, even the most turbulent, admitted that the delay must be necessary to our success, or Lord Wellington would not allow it.

The night at length passed over, and the dawn of morning ushered in a day pregnant with events that will be recorded in our history as amongst the most brilliant that grace its annals. The batteries against the curtain soon reduced it to a heap of ruins; and the certainty that the trial would be made the same evening, re-established good humour amongst the soldiers. It was known, early in the day, that the breaches were allotted to the light and fourth divisions; to the fifth, the task of escalading the town on the side of the fort of Pardeleras; and to Picton, with his invincible third, to carry the castle by escalading its stupendous walls, upwards of thirty feet high. The Portuguese brigade, under General Power, were to divert the enemy's attention on the side of San Christoval; while three hundred men, taken from the guard in the trenches, were to carry the outwork of San Roque.

To ensure the success of an enterprize, upon which so much was at stake, twenty thousand men were to be brought into action as I have described; by five

o'clock, all the ladders were portioned out to those destined to mount them. The time fixed for the assemblage of the troops was eight; that of the attack ten. The day passed over heavily, and hour after hour was counted, each succeeding one seeming to double the length of the one that preceded it; but, true as the needle to the pole, the long-expected moment arrived, and the clear, but deep note of the town clock was now heard throughout our lines, as it tolled the hour of eight, and ere its last vibration had ceased, the vast mass of assailants were in battle array. A thick and dusky vapour, issuing from the Guadiana and Rivellas, hung above the heads of the hostile forces, and hid alike, by its heavy veil, each from the view of its opponent; the batteries on both sides were silent, as if they reserved their efforts for the approaching struggle; and, except the gentle noise which the rippling of the Guadiana created, or the croaking of the countless frogs that filled the marshes on each side of its banks, everything was as still as if the night was to be one of quiet repose; and a passing stranger, unacquainted with the previous events, might easily have supposed that our army were no otherwise occupied than in the ordinary routine of an evening parade; but Phillipon, profiting by this cessation, re-trenched and barricadoed the breaches in a manner hereafter to be described.

So soon as each division had formed on its ground in open column of companies, the arms were piled, and the officers and soldiers either walked about in groups of five or six together, or sat down under an olive tree, to observe, at their ease, the arrangements of the different brigades which were to take a part in the contest. Then, again, might be seen some writing to their friends—a hasty scroll, no doubt, and, in my opinion, an ill-timed one. It is a bad time, at the

moment of entering a breach, to write to a man's father or mother, much less his wife, to tell them so; and, besides, it has an unseasonable appearance in the eyes of the soldiers, who are decidedly the most competent judges of what their officers should be, or, at least, what *they* would *wish* them to be, which is tantamount, at such a crisis.

There is a solemnity of feeling which accompanies the expectation of every great event in our lives, and the man who can be altogether dead to such feeling is little, if anything, better than a brute. The present moment was one that was well calculated to fill every bosom throughout the army; for, mixed with expectation, hope, and suspense, it was rendered still more touching to the heart, by the music of some of the regiments, which played at the head of each battalion, as the soldiers sauntered about to beguile the last hour many of them were destined to live. The band of my corps, the 88th, all Irish, played several airs which exclusively belong to their country, and it is impossible to describe the effect it had upon us all; such an air as "Savourneen Deelish" is sufficient, at any time, to inspire a feeling of melancholy, but on an occasion like the present, it acted powerfully on the feelings of the men: they thought of their distant homes—of their friends, and of bygone days. It was Easter Sunday; and the contrast which their present position presented to what it would have been, were they in their native land, afforded ample food for the occupation of their minds; but they were not allowed time for much longer reflection. The approach of General Kempt, accompanied by his staff, was the signal for the formation of the column of attack; and almost immediately the men were ordered to stand to their arms. Little, if any, directions were given; indeed, they were unnecessary,—because the men, from

long service, were so conversant with the duty they had to perform, that it would have been but a waste of words and time, to say what was required of them.

All was now in readiness. It was twenty-five minutes past nine: the soldiers, unincumbered with their knapsacks—their stocks off—their shirt-collars unbuttoned—their trowsers tucked up to the knee—their tattered jackets, so worn out, as to render the regiment they belonged to barely recognizable—their huge whiskers, and bronzed faces, which several hard-fought campaigns had changed from their natural hue—but, above all, their self-confidence, devoid of boast or bravado, gave them the appearance of what they, in reality, were—an invincible host.

The division now moved forward in one solid mass, —the 45th leading, followed closely by the 88th and 74th; the brigade of Portuguese, consisting of the 9th and 21st Regiments of the line, under Colonel de Champlemond, were next: while the 5th, 77th, 83rd, and 94th, under Colonel Campbell, brought up the rear. Their advance was undisturbed until they reached the Rivellas; but at this spot, some fire-balls, which the enemy threw out, caused a great light, and the third division, three thousand strong, was to be seen from the ramparts of the castle. The soldiers, finding they were discovered, raised a shout of defiance, which was responded to by the garrison, and in a moment afterwards, every gun that could be brought to bear against them was in action; but, no way daunted by the havoc made in his ranks, Picton, who just then joined his soldiers, forded the Rivellas, knee-deep, and soon gained the foot of the castle wall, and here he saw the work that was cut out for him, for he no longer fought in darkness. The vast quantity of combustible matter, which out-topped this stupendous defence, was in a blaze, and the flames which issued forth on every side, lighted, not only the ramparts and ditch, but the

plain that intervened between them and the Rivellas. A host of veterans crowned the wall, all armed in a manner as imposing as novel; each man had beside him eight loaded fire-locks; while at intervals, and proportionably distributed, were pikes of an enormous length, with crooks attached to them, for the purpose of grappling with the ladders; the top of the wall was covered with rocks of ponderous size, only requiring a slight push to hurl them upon the heads of our soldiers; and there was a sufficiency of hand-grenades and small shells at the disposal of the men that defended this point to have destroyed the entire of the besieging army; while on the flanks of each curtain, batteries, charged to the muzzle with grape and case shot, either swept away entire sections, or disorganized the ladders as they were about to be placed, and an incessant storm of musketry, at the distance of fifteen yards, completed the resources the enemy brought into play, which, as may be seen, were of vast formidableness.

To oppose this mass of warriors, and heterogeneous congregation of missiles, Picton had nothing to depend upon for success but his tried and invincible old soldiers—he relied firmly upon their devoted courage, and he was not disappointed. The terrible aspect of the rugged wall, thirty feet in height, in no way intimidated them; and, under a frighful fire of small arms and artillery, the ponderous ladders were dragged into the ditch, and, with a degree of hardihood that augered well for the issue, were planted against the lofty battlements that domineered above his soldier's heads: but this was only the commencement of one of the most terrific struggles recorded during this hard-fought night. Each ladder, so soon as placed upright, was speedily mounted, and crowded from the top round to the bottom one; but those who escaped the pike-thrusts, were shattered to atoms by the heavy

cross-fire from the bastions, and the soldiers who occupied them, impaled upon the bayonets of their comrades in the ditch, died at the foot of those ladders which they had carried such a distance, and with so much labour.

An hour had now passed over—no impression had been made upon the castle, and the affair began to have a very doubtful appearance, for, already, more than half of the third division had been cut off. General Kempt, commanding the right brigade, fell, wounded, early in the night; and the 88th Regiment alone, the strongest in the division, lost more than half their officers and men, and the other regiments were scarcely in a better condition. Picton, seeing the frightful situation in which he was placed, became uneasy; but the good will with which his brave companions exposed and laid down their lives re-assured him; he called out to his men—told them they had never been defeated, and that now was the moment to conquer or die. Picton, although not loved by his soldiers, was respected by them; and his appeal, as well as his unshaken front, did wonders in changing the desperate state of the division. Major Ridge, of the 5th, by his personal exertions, caused two ladders to be placed upright, and he, himself, led the way to the top of one, while Canch, a Grenadier officer of the 5th, mounted the other; a few men, at last, got footing on the top of the wall; at the same time, Lieutenant William Mackie of the 88th—he who led the forlorn hope at Rodrigo,—(unnoticed!—still a lieutenant!!)—and Mr. Richard Martin (son of the member for Galway, who acted as a volunteer with the 88th during the siege) succeeding in mounting another. Mackie—ever foremost in the fight—soon established his men on the battlements, himself unhurt; but Martin fell desperately wounded. A general rush to the ladders now took place, and the

dead and wounded, that lay in the ditch, were indiscriminately trampled upon, for humanity was nowhere to be found. A frightful butchery followed this success; and the shouts of our soldiery, mingled with the cries of the Frenchmen, supplicating for mercy, or in the agonies of death, were heard at a great distance. But few prisoners were made; and the division occupied, with much regularity, the different points allotted to each regiment. Meanwhile the ravelin of San Roque was carried by the gorge, by a detachment drawn from the trenches, under the command of Major Wilson of the 48th, and the engineers were directed to blow up the dam and sluice that caused the inundation of the Rivellas, by which means the passage of that river, between La Picurina and the breaches could be more easily effected. One entire regiment of Germans, called the regiment of Hesse d'Armstadt, that defended the ravelin, were put to death.

While all this was taking place at the castle and San Roque, a fearful scene was acting at the breaches. The light and fourth divisions, ten thousand strong, advanced to the glacis undiscovered—a general silence pervading the whole, as the spirits of the men settled into that deep sobriety which denotes much determination of purpose; but at this spot their footsteps were heard; and, "perhaps since the invention of gunpowder,"* its effects were never more powerfully brought into action. In a moment the different materials, which the enemy had arranged in the neighbourhood of the breaches, were lighted up—darkness was converted into light—torches blazed along the battlements —and a spectator, at a short distance from the walls, could distinguish the features of the contending parties. A battery of mortars, doubly loaded with grenades, and

* Colonel Jones's sieges.

a blaze of musketry, unlike anything hitherto witnessed by the oldest soldier, opened a murderous fire against the two divisions; but, unshaken by its effects, they pressed onward, and jumped into the ditch. The fourth division, destined to carry the breach to the right, met with a frightful catastrophe at the onset. The leading platoons, consisting of the fusileer brigade, sprang into that part of the ditch that had been filled by the inundation of the Rivellas, and were seen no more; but the bubbles that rose on the surface of the water were a terrible assurance of the struggles which those devoted soldiers—the men of Albuera—ineffectually made to extricate themselves from the deadly grasp of each other, and from so unworthy an end.

Warned by the fate of their companions, the remainder turned to the left, and following the footsteps of the light division, pressed onwards in one mingled mass to the breaches of the curtain and La Trinidad. Arrived here, they encountered a series of obstacles that it was impossible to surmount, and which I find great difficulty in describing. Planks, of a sufficient length and breadth to embrace the entire face of the breaches, studded with spikes a foot long, were to be surmounted ere they reached the top of the breach; yet some there were—the brave Colonel Macleod, of the 43rd, amongst the number—who succeeded so far, but on gaining the top, *chevaux de frise*, formed of long sword-blades firmly fixed in the trunks of trees of a great size, and chained, boom-like, across the breach, were still to be passed; while at each side, and behind the *chevaux de frise*, trenches were cut, sufficiently extensive for the accommodation of three thousand men, who stood in an amphitheatrical manner—each tier above the other—and armed with eight muskets each, like their companions at the castle, awaited the attack so soon as the planks on the face, and the *chevaux de frise* on the top of the breach were surmounted; but

they might have waited until doomsday for that event, because it was morally impossible.

The vast glare of light caused by the different explosions, and the fire of cannon and musketry, gave to the breaches the appearance of a volcano vomiting forth fire in the midst of the army: the ground shook—meteors shone forth in every direction—and when for a moment the roar of battle ceased, it was succeeded by cries of agony, or the furious exultation of the imperial soldiers. To stand before such a storm of fire, much less endeavour to overcome a barrier so impregnable, required men whose minds, as well as frames, were cast in a mould not human; but, nevertheless, so it was. The gallant light and fourth divisions boldly braved every danger, and with a good will, rarely to be found, prolonged a struggle, the very failure of which, taking into account the nature of the obstacles opposed to them, and their immense losses, was sufficient to immortalize them. At length, after a dreadful sacrifice of lives—all the Generals, and most of the Colonels, being either killed or wounded—they were driven from the breaches, while the Frenchmen, securely entrenched behind them, might be seen waving their caps in token of defiance. This was too galling for men who had never known defeat—and they ran back headlong to the attack, and destruction. But for what end? To judge from the past, when their numbers were more numerous, they had failed; they were now reduced to less than half, while the resources of the enemy were unimpaired; and the prospect before them was hideous. Their former efforts, when they were in their full vigour, had not been productive of any good result, and they felt that those they had made were stronger than those which were yet to come; but experience and feeling were alike unheeded—hope, more powerful than either, urged them on, "and like an unlucky gamester, every fresh reverse but increased their eagerness to continue

the game." Again did they attempt to pass this terrible gulf of steel and flame—and again were they driven back—cut down—annihilated. Hundreds of brave soldiers lay in piles upon each other, weltering in blood, and trodden down by their own companions. The 43rd left twenty-two officers and three hundred men on the breach; four companies of the 52nd were blown to atoms by an explosion; and the 95th, as indeed every other regiment engaged, suffered in proportion. Our batteries, from whence a clear view of all that was passing could be distinguished, maddened by the havoc at the breaches, poured in a torrent of shot; and, in the excitement of the moment, killed friends as well as foes. Finally, the remnant of the two divisions retired; and with a valour, bordering upon desperation, prepared for a third trial; but the success of Picton's attack was by this time whispered amongst them, and the evacuation of the breaches soon after confirmed the rumour.

While the attack of the castle and breaches was in progress, the fifth division, under General Leith, maintained a fierce and dangerous struggle on the south side of the city and the Pardeleras fort; but the resistance at those points was feeble, as compared with the other two. In some instances, the French troops deserted the walls before they were carried; and it is worthy of remark, that while the 38th Regiment were mounting the ladders, the imperial soldiers were scrambling down them at the reverse side—in many instances treading upon the fingers of our own men! The few men of Leith's division, thus established on the ramparts, boldly pressed on in the hope of causing a change in favour of the men at the breaches; but the multitude that had fled before this handful of troops became reassured when they beheld the scantiness of their numbers, and, returning to the fight, forced them up a street leading to the ramparts. Leith's men became

panic-struck by this unexpected burst, and retraced their steps in confusion; many were killed ere they reached the wall; and some, infected by the contagion of the moment, jumped over the battlements, and were dashed to pieces in their fall. One, an officer, bearing the flag of his regiment, fearing it might be captured, flung himself from the wall, and falling into a part of the ditch that was filled with the slime of the river, escaped unhurt. At this critical moment, General Walker reached the spot with a fresh body of troops, and driving back the French with ruinous disorder, established his men at this point; and from that moment, the fate of Badajoz was sealed. The enemy fled in every direction towards the bridge leading to San Christoval; and the remnant of the ill-fated light and fourth divisions with difficulty entered the town by the breaches, although unopposed.

It was now half-past two o'clock in the morning, and the fighting had continued, without cessation, from ten the preceding night. More than three hundred and fifty officers and four thousand men had fallen on our side; yet the enemy's loss was but small in proportion; because, with the exception of the castle, where the third division got fairly amongst them, the French with that tact for which they are so remarkable, got away the moment they found themselves out-matched.

Shortly after the last attack at the breaches had failed, and long after the castle had been carried, (although it was not generally known at the time,) I was occupied, with Major Thompson of the 74th, (acting-engineer,) in placing some casks of gunpowder under the dam of the Rivellas, in front of San Roque; when, while leaning on his shoulder, I was struck by a musket-bullet in the left breast; I staggered back, but did not fall, and Thompson, bandaging my breast and shoulder with his handkerchief, caused me to be

removed inside the ravellin; but the firing continued with such violence upon this point, that it was long before I could venture out of it. At length, nearly exhausted from loss of blood, and fearing that I might be unable to reach the camp if I delayed much longer, I quitted it, accompanied by two sappers of my own corps, (Bray and Macgowan,) who supported me as I walked towards the trenches. Bray was wounded in the leg while he tried to cover me from the enemy's fire; but this brave fellow soon recovered, and afterwards greatly distinguished himself in the battle of the Pyrenees, by killing a French Colonel at the head of his battalion.

By this time the attack of Badajoz was, in effect, finished. Some irregular firing was still to be heard as the fugitives hurried from street to street towards the Roman bridge leading to San Christoval, but all resistance might be said to have ceased. An attempt to retake the castle was made in vain; but the brave Colonel Ridge of the 5th, who had so distinguished himself, lost his life by almost one of the last shots that was fired in this fruitless effort to recover a place which had cost the army the hearts'-blood of the third division; and the dawn of the morning of the 7th of April showed to the rest of the army, like a speck in the horizon, the shattered remnant of Picton's invincible soldiers, as they stood in a lone group upon the ramparts of a spot that, by its isolated situation, towering height, and vast strength, seemed not to appertain to the rest of the fortifications, and which the enemy, with their entire disposable force, were unable to take from the few brave men who now stood triumphant upon its lofty battlements. Nevertheless, triumphant and stern as was their attitude, it was not without its alloy, for more than five-sixths of their officers and comrades either lay dead at their feet, or badly wounded in the ditch below them. All

their Generals, Picton amongst the number, and almost all their Colonels, were either killed or wounded; and as they stood to receive the praises of their commander, and the cheers of their equally brave, but unfortunate companions in arms, their diminished front and haggard appearance told, with terrible truth, the nature of the conflict in which they had been engaged. Yet those soldiers—the companions of Lord Wellington in six campaigns, and victorious in more than a hundred combats, and, in saying this, I make no distinction between any of the Peninsular heroes—have no medal to mark their deeds! They stand,—if not a degraded,—that they could not be,—an unrewarded tribe, while the Waterloo army,—nine-tenths of whom never saw a shot fired before that battle,—are honoured with a medal, and two years' of service over the heads of these very men.

The limits of this chapter will not allow the writer of it to enter more in detail upon the different features of the storming of Badajoz. Many brave officers greatly distinguished themselves, and some few escaped as by a miracle; but those matters, as also the sacking of the city, shall be the subject of the next. Early on the morning of the 7th of April, Phillipon and his garrison, which had taken refuge in San Christoval, hoisted the white flag in token of submission, and from that moment the beautiful and rich town of Badajoz became a scene of plunder and devastation.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE BATTLE OF BUSACO AND THE THIRD DIVISION.*

HAVING compared the following statements by Sir Henry King and Major Mackie, respecting the two British brigades of the third division engaged in the battle of Busaco, with our own notes and recollections of that conflict, we are enabled, as far as our knowledge extends, to add our individual testimony to that of those competent witnesses.

The extreme difficulty of the historian's task has been frequently admitted and dwelt upon in our pages. The toils and perplexities of that invidious office are so evident, that the marvel is rather how any man can be found to undertake it and succeed, when the subjects are contemporaneous, than that failure or inaccuracy should be the result. In the description of battles, the general picture must be compounded of detached sketches taken from the limited views of individuals at particular points; and these fractional parts being necessarily imbued with the tone and bias, and dependent on the opportunities, of the spectator, increase the confusion of the artist by whom such ill-assorted elements must be combined into a harmonious whole. That he should often succeed, is, we repeat, more surprising than that he should occasionally fail or offend.

The subject discussed by our correspondents is the part taken by Picton's division in the battle of Busaco, as it is related by the historian of the Peninsular war,

* From the United Service Journal.

upon the faith of documents prefixed to his fifth volume. However it may be shown, by the narratives of our gallant friends above named, that these documents were erroneous as far as regarded the third division, we are bound to do justice, from personal knowledge, to the anxiety of the historian to obtain accurate and impartial information concerning the striking event he was then about to describe.

The impression of Colonel Waller, a most estimable and zealous officer, must have been unaccountably distorted when he flew to the rescue of the "Fighting Division" from their grim assailants on the ridge of Busaco! Alas, for his misplaced solicitude! The bear-skin caps and mailed chins of the Frenchmen had no terrors for Lightburne's brigade, or their neighbours, the Connaught Rangers and old 45th,—*nec aspera terrent*;—the former, as their immediate commander, Sir Henry King states, panted for closer quarters—the latter, feeling the collision, struck their foes like a thunderbolt, and while Colonel Waller was galloping for aid, the bear-skins were fleeing like worried sheep to the shelter of their own position and reserves. Since the day of Vimiera such a rout had not been seen—and never was confidence more high or better warranted in any band or body of the British army than amongst the very troops the worthy Assistant-Quartermaster-General thought doomed to destruction.

The intervention of our gallant associates of the fifth division unquestionably applied to a different body of the enemy, and to some minor attack or diversion at a later period of the day. The main assault, to which we have just alluded, commenced with the misty dawn, and no sooner was the enemy perceived on the ridge than he was attacked and broken to pieces. But the details of this section of a battle, from which the third division derives one of its

most glorious and inalienable trophies, are discussed in the following narratives so clearly and concurrently with our own views, that additional comment on our part is unnecessary. Could further doubt exist on the point which forms the subject of this discussion, the despatch of our great leader alone decides the question:—

Mr. Editor,—My attention having been called to a memorandum of the late Colonel Waller, respecting the battle of Busaco, prefixed to the fifth volume of "Napier's History of the War in the Peninsula," which contains some material errors, I feel myself compelled to give a statement of what took place under my own immediate view, as commanding the second battalion 5th infantry, in the third division on that memorable day. Omitting any preliminary detail, I shall proceed at once to narrate occurrences as they were.

Lightburne's brigade, constituting the left of the third division, was formed in line on the brow of Busaco before dawn; when daylight allowed, a very heavy column of the enemy was perceived commencing the ascent, and, apparently, directing its march on our front; a cloud of tirailleurs were thrown out on its flanks to cover its advance, and the light companies were ordered out to oppose them. At this moment Lord Wellington, attended by his staff and other officers, rode up, and asked where there was a good position for a gun. I pointed out a small rocky eminence in advance, and on the right of my battalion. A gun was promptly brought up, and opened on the enemy. The fifth light company was now warmly engaged on the slope of the hill, and the battalion being much exposed, and sustaining some loss from a galling fire, I was directed by Lord Wellington, repeated by Sir Brent Spencer, to retire a few paces. This was done by stepping back, so as to clear the

rising of the slope. Lord Wellington then proceeded to another part of the position, Lieut.-Colonels Colin Campbell, A.D.C., and Charles Napier, being previously wounded in rear of the gun. The enemy's column suffering much from the fire, directed with great precision and effect by Captain Lane, R.A., and from our light infantry, changed its direction by an oblique movement to its left, advancing steadily to the large rocky ridge or projecting point on the summit of the heights, which it attained under a heavy flanking fire.

The tirailleurs were soon after repulsed and driven back, leaving many killed and wounded in our front, belonging to the 2nd Chasseurs Légers, a very distinguished corps in the French army. A desultory fire of musketry was kept up for some time, from which we suffered some loss. The change in the direction of the enemy's column brought it in contact with the left of the light brigade of the third division, upon and beyond the rocky ridge, above described, which interrupted my view of its further movements.

The enemy did not long retain his advantage. I could not observe whether he had extended his front by deployment on our right; but, apparently, he had no time to form his line so as to "sweep the ridge of the hill" in our front, if such was the intention; for in a very brief space of time he was hurled down the steep, by a most gallant attack from the regiments on our right, namely, the 88th and 45th, and retired with the utmost precipitation and confusion, leaving the glacis of the hill covered with dead and wounded, nor did he attempt to rally or slacken his pace till at the very base, which, from the formation of the ground, (a rather steep though gradual declivity,) was at a considerable distance from the summit. He then continued to retire in more order, but in manifest dismay, nor was any attempt made to renew the attack. The

charge, which decided the defeat of the enemy at this part of the position, I always understood to have been made by the 45th and 88th Regiments, and this was generally received and believed in the third division.

From the above plain narration, it will appear that Colonel Waller has erred in the first instance, by stating that the action commenced by a fire of artillery upon the left of Picton's position; nor did the column of attack, which directed its march on our front, deploy into line previous to ascending the hill, but advanced to the summit in a solid mass. I saw but one of the three attacking columns; that alone demanded my attention. I have always supposed that a third column of the enemy, (the second having attacked and been repulsed by the right of Picton's division on the Cantaro Pass,) while endeavouring to turn our flank and gain the great Coimbra road,) was encountered by Leith's division of Hill's corps, and totally defeated.

Colonel Waller has also erred in stating that "Lightburne's brigade was repeatedly charged, and fairly driven from the rocky part of the position." This never took place. The second battalion 5th infantry was never charged by the enemy, and, consequently, never driven from its position; it remained on its original ground, in readiness, and, I may add, in earnest hope, that the enemy would afford an opportunity to charge, when we anticipated a very different result. I have accounted for that opportunity not having been given, by the deviation of the enemy from his direct line of march. The utmost steadiness prevailed in our ranks, nor was there the slightest hesitation or wavering. The enemy was decidedly repulsed, the infantry most gallantly driving back the Chasseurs Légers in our front.

I never saw Colonel Waller during the action; nor was any order communicated to me till its close, after

the decisive charge had taken place, when the fifth was ordered to the right, and was thrown back into column for that purpose; but its advance was rendered unnecessary by the total rout of the enemy and his precipitate retreat. Sir Thomas Picton was chiefly in the centre, and on the right of his division, where the brunt of the conflict took place.

I must here remark, that no one is more competent than yourself to appreciate the accuracy of the events I detail, having commanded the light company of the 5th in the engagement.

I have written the above without reference to any document, public or private, having indeed none at hand. The lapse of twenty-six years might wear away the recollection of trivial events, but the stirring scenes of active warfare are engraven in more durable characters on the memory, and I relate what I saw, and what I believe to be incontrovertible fact.

It is not within my province, nor is it my intention, to enter into a defence of Picton's faults as a man; his merits as a soldier I may venture to assert: his gallantry, skill, and conduct as a General of Division were proved on every occasion in the field; and the gallant men led to victory by him, although grieved by his intemperate language and apparent prejudices, will, I doubt not, bear a just testimony to the former, while they deprecate the latter. He fell in his country's service; such a death consecrates his memory; let it obliterate his errors.

In conclusion, I must observe that the confidence placed in the combinations and arrangements of Lord Wellington, preparatory to battle, infused into his soldiers of all grades an enthusiastic devotion and anticipation of victory. No apprehensions of defeat or exposure to attack, in rear or on a flank, were ever felt or expressed: every exigency was known to be foreseen and provided for, and that in the event of

repulse, succour was near. This feeling actuated the whole British army in the Peninsula, and was attended by those brilliant successes which distinguished the war, and have inspirited the pages of its historian. I remain, &c. &c.

HENRY KING, Major-General.

Elmdon Hall, Birmingham, Dec. 17th, 1836.

MR. EDITOR,—In a work so extensive as that of Colonel Napier's History of the Peninsular War, embracing so many and such complicated details, information as to which must be collected from so many different sources, perfect accuracy, as to every point, it would certainly be most unreasonable to expect. It is equally evident that any errors as to minuter points can in no way detract from the value of a work like his, so far as regards his statements relative to the operations of the war on a more extended scale, and the correctness of the conclusions he has drawn from these, the soundness of which must rest on different grounds.

To the public, therefore, at large, or to posterity, it is a matter of but trivial moment, whether in the work in question there are, or are not, errors as to the minutiæ of the various actions; not so, however, as regards the corps engaged in the several operations referred to in the work, and more especially as they may affect the feelings of the surviving officers, and of the friends of those who are no more.

It is also evident that when errors as to any part of the details in works of this description are pointed out in the author's lifetime, and either corrected by him, or the accuracy of his statements fully vindicated, it must go far in accrediting the work at large, and vouching for its correctness where it is not called in question.

For these reasons I am confident that I shall not have merely the forgiveness but the thanks of this gallant and able writer for pointing out to him some mistakes into which I think he has evidently been misled in detailing the operations in the battle of Busaco.

To the existence of these errors I had occasion to allude in my strictures upon Robinson's Memoir of General Picton, inserted in a former number of your Journal, and my attention has again been more particularly directed to the subject by the publication of the fifth volume of the work, containing some documentary evidence in the shape of letters from Major-General Sir John Cameron and Colonel Waller, corroborative, as Colonel Napier thinks, of the accuracy of his previous statements. How far they answer their intended purpose I shall leave yourself and readers to determine, on perusing the following comments on them, as they affect the leading features of the battle.

This division in the general arrangements were allotted for the defence of that portion of the ridge extending from the St. Antonio road, about a mile to its left.

Having passed to the right of the Mondego at Pena Cova on the 21st September, they encamped near the village of Conteças, on the Coimbra side of the mountain, till the 25th, when they took up a position on its summit, the right brigade of the division upon and close to the road of St. Antonio de Cantaro. The advance being thrown forward to the neighbourhood of this village, were in the evening of that day driven back, when the ravine at the bottom of the ascent became the line of demarcation between the contending armies. During this interval, that is, between the 21st and 25th, a road of communication had been formed along the ridge, on the reverse or Coimbra side, near the summit, but so far below the

very top of the ridge, or hog's back, that troops passing along this road could not possibly see what was going forward on the other side.

The evening of the 25th and following day were spent in some skirmishing, and a cannonnade of our guns upon the reconnoitring parties of the enemy, a portion of whose force, the second corps under Regnier, were concentrated upon the road leading from Mortagoa to the village of St. Antonio de Cantaro, evidently evincing a disposition to force this point of our position; that portion of the ridge from the pass to the Mondego being of a more rugged and inaccessible character.

Perceiving this obvious intention of the enemy, Sir Thomas Picton had, on the evening of the 26th, so disposed his force (the British portion not exceeding fifteen hundred bayonets,) as to meet the attack anxiously expected the following morning. Nor were we disappointed: as the dawn of day discovered the enemy in motion, a column having, during the obscurity of the night, moved along the bottom to attack, considerably to our left, and nearly opposite to the point where the ridge rises abruptly, or as I have in my previous remarks designated it, the convent-hill, the enemy at the same time making an attack upon the road, and with considerable bodies at intermediate points, with an evident intention of distracting our attention.

To meet the first, the 88th Regiment, which stood upon the left of Picton's force, was instantly moved by Colonel Wallace, and to their support four companies of the 45th, under Major Gwynne, with a portion of the 8th Portuguese following in their track.

Having premised thus much, I shall now proceed to state the several mistakes into which Colonel Napier and his authorities have fallen, and whereby, however

unintentionally on their part, very great injustice has been done to the third division as a whole, and more especially to that portion of it which, at the time, I had myself the honour to belong.

These errors I conceive Colonel Napier has himself summed up in his answer to the observations of Picton's biographer, when he says "It is now affirmed distinctly and positively that the French did break the 8th Portuguese Regiment, did gain the rocks on the summit of the Sierra, and on the right of the third division, did ensconce themselves in these rocks, and were going to sweep the summit of the Sierra, when the fifth division under General Leith, attacked them, and the 9th Regiment, led by Colonel Cameron, did form under fire, as described, did charge, and did beat the enemy out of these rocks, and if they had not done so, the third division, then engaged with other troops, would have been in a very critical situation. Not only is all this re-affirmed, but it shall be proved by the most irrefragable evidence."

Now, Mr. Editor, in answer to these several statements of Colonel Napier, thus distinctly and positively affirmed, I beg leave as distinctly and as positively to affirm, that the right of Picton's division never was forced back; that the enemy never did reach the summit of the ridge to the right of his division, and there ensconce themselves in rocks; and further, that the right of Picton's division never was in the slightest danger of being turned. In proof of these assertions, it need only be stated that the brigade of Portuguese artillery, and 74th British regiment, in position on the extreme right, not only never did retreat a single step, but the former never had occasion to move during the day, nor the latter till they advanced at the close of the action, as I shall afterwards have occasion to explain.

Having thus shown that it could not possibly be at

this point of the position occupied by the third division that General Leith rendered to the former the essential service they are represented to have done, I shall now proceed to show that neither was it rendered at that point where the most formidable attack was made upon it. This is the more required, because Colonel Napier's description would leave his readers to imagine that it was where, and when, Picton's division was most seriously engaged, that the latter received that timely aid, which, saving them from defeat, left them for ever after so beggared of gratitude to the fifth division.

This point, where Regnier's most serious attack was actually made, was not, as Colonel Napier asserts, between the third and fifth divisions, thus endangering, as he thinks, the turning of Picton's right, but on the extreme left, near the convent-hill, nearly a mile from his right. Instead of six guns playing upon them in their ascent, or of there being anything else to justify the account he gives of the astonishing power and resolution with which they scaled the mountain, overthrowing everything that opposed their progress, the truth is, that, having advanced at first under cover of a dense fog, they were totally unperceived until they had made considerable progress up the steep. A fire of some rounds was then opened on them from two guns, by direction of Lord Wellington. This, however, could not greatly retard their progress; so that continuing their course, still under cover of the fog, the first intimation that the troops on the height obtained of their approach was the head of the column just appearing within view.

Neither, as I again assert, did this column ever penetrate the line occupied by the third division, or establish themselves on the height. A portion of them, undoubtedly, were ensconced in rocks, but not upon the summit, while the whole of them had much

to accomplish before they could have thought of sweeping the Sierra.

The head of the column having just reached the top when seen by Colonel Wallace, he immediately detached three companies who drove the body from the rocks, while he himself, with the remainder of the 88th, and the four companies of the 45th, under Major Gwynne, attacked and drove the main column down the steep, strewing the ground, as Colonel Napier has graphically described, with dead and dying, to the very bottom of the valley, not, however, as he would lead his readers to imagine, after a general *mêlée*, in which these regiments had only joined with others.

With the exception of a portion of the 8th Portuguese which joined in the pursuit, the repulsing this column, which made undoubtedly the principal attack on the third division, and was, in truth, the main feature of the day, was accomplished by the above, not only without any assistance from the fifth division, but even without the aid of any other portion of the third.

I feel the more desirous to note the aid thus afforded by the 8th Portuguese, from the unqualified manner in which that corps is, once again, represented by Colonel Napier to have been broken in pieces. Whatever may have been the case with the remainder of this regiment, I can positively assert that this was not the case with that portion of it stationed on the right of the 88th and 45th. These, so far from being broken to pieces, driven as chaff before the wind, did, on the contrary, maintain their ground, and join in the pursuit, as I have said above. I may mention that a regiment of Portuguese militia, stationed somewhere in the rear, at no great distance from these corps, were panic-struck, and fled almost to a man. They all, in fact, betook themselves to their heels, with the exception of their commanding-officer and another, who, after the action, applied to Colonel Wallace, and ob-

tained from him a certificate to the effect that they had kept their post.

While the 88th and 45th were thus engaged in repulsing this attack, the enemy made a simultaneous attempt on the pass of St. Antonio, where, however, they made little or no impression, being at first exposed to a destructive fire of the Portuguese artillery, under Major Arentchild, an officer of the King's German Legion, and afterwards kept in check by the light troops of the division under Colonel Williams, and a portion of the Portuguese. Having, from this cause, advanced but little from the bottom of the hill, this evidently was not the spot where the supposed effective aid of the fifth division was required and given.

This brings me now to state, what, once pointed out to Colonel Napier, I feel assured that every inquiry he may hereafter make will more and more convince him is the truth, which is, that these several operations of the third division have been by him confounded and mixed up with that attack in which Leith's division actually had a part. Upon inquiry, he will find that General Leith's affair did not take place till a considerable lapse of time after the contest of the 88th and 45th was over; he will also find that it did not take place on Picton's right, but in reality at an intermediate point between his right and left.

Of this latter contest I have no desire to speak disparagingly, nor any wish to detract from the merit of the fifth division. I do maintain, however, that, when compared with the attack repelled by the 88th and 45th, the contest in which Leith's division was engaged was but of minor import. Can a stronger proof of this be asked for than the simple fact that the whole loss of the troops therein engaged amounted only to two officers, two serjeants, and forty-three rank and file killed and wounded. Does this tally with the

paramount importance Colonel Napier attaches to Leith's affair? Does this make it appear that the latter had any great share in those operations which put no less than three thousand of the enemy *hors de combat*, as was acknowledged in the intercepted dispatches of their General, be it remarked, equal to that which Napoleon confessed to even at Austerlitz?

I ask Colonel Napier if he can seriously hazard the opinion that the heroes of Austerlitz, established on the heights, ensconced in rocks, and going to sweep the summit of the Sierra, could have been baffled in their purpose, could have been driven from a position such as is here described, and totally defeated, leaving their adversaries to boast of a victory acquired at so very insignificant a cost as was this loss sustained by Leith's division. Truly, Mr. Editor, I should have argued differently of these heroes from what was seen and felt of their prowess at another point, and at an earlier period of the day. While, however, I have documents to prove that Picton was right in calling the affair in which Leith was engaged the last, so would the smallness of the loss the fifth division sustained at least afford presumption that he was also justified in styling it, by comparison, a feeble effort of the enemy. Rocks the latter may have met with upon this occasion, and in these rocks they may have been ensconced, and from these rocks may have been driven by Leith; but what I pointedly and decidedly affirm is, that these rocks, wherever situated, were not on Picton's right, and that the French whom Leith encountered and defeated never were established there. That any portion of the enemy ever established themselves so completely on the heights as to rest their right upon a precipice overhanging the reverse or Coimbra side of the Sierra, or that considerable bodies of the enemy had descended and were killed there, are, I apprehend, facts that even

Wellington himself was not aware of till he saw them in Colonel Napier's book.

How the enemy, having ever gained this immense advantage, should have suffered themselves to be so easily dispossessed of it as the loss of Leith implies, would, I think, puzzle the gallant Colonel and his authorities to account for.

Before I drop this portion of the subject, allow me further to express the surprise with which I learn that Leith was indebted for the good fortune that he had in meeting with the enemy to the accidental circumstance of having fallen in with an officer galloping along, and shouting—"To the rescue, ho!" like an ancient warrior in a border fray, imploring aid, for God's sake, for the third to protect them from danger which existed only in his own imagination.

The more probable reason, and what I have always heard assigned is, that when he came in contact with the enemy, Leith, in obedience to the instructions of the great master-mind that planned and overlooked the operations of the day, was watching the progress of events, that he might give his aid if it should be required.

Indeed, that this was the case, is proved by what Colonel Cameron has stated in General Leith's own words—"That the ground where the British brigade was now moving was behind a chain of rocky eminences, where it had appeared clearly the enemy was successfully pushing to establish himself, and precluded Major-General Leith from seeing at that moment the progress the enemy was making; but by the information of staff-officers, stationed on purpose, who communicated his direction and progress, Major-General Leith moved the British brigade so as to endeavour to meet and check the enemy when they gained the ascendancy." Here we have Colonel Cameron's admission, that the column which General Leith attacked

could have been but in very temporary possession of the height, since he states that when first seen they were yet in the act of pushing forward to establish themselves.

Indeed, every concurring circumstance affords strong presumptive proof that Leith, who was on the ridge, two miles to the right of the pass, at the commencement of the action, was moving along the road of communication, entered the position of the third, and passed on the left till he embraced the point of ascent of the enemy's column, which he repulsed. This is evident from the manner in which he formed line by wheeling up into that formation, when he fired and charged. Colonel Cameron also supports this assumption when he says, "He, Leith, therefore ordered the 9th British Regiment, which had hitherto been moving rapidly by its left in column, in order to gain the most advantageous ground for checking the enemy, to form line, which they did with the greatest promptitude, accuracy, and coolness, under the fire of the enemy, who had just appeared formed on that part of the rocky eminence which overlooks the back of the ridge, and who had then, for the first time, perceived the British brigade under him."

That the disposition of Leith's force must have been known to Picton, and that this column of the enemy was discovered in its advance, and immediately attacked and defeated by the fifth division, satisfactorily accounts for its being left entirely to them, without the supposition Colonel Napier makes, that this was caused by the third having their hands at the time full elsewhere; a gratuitous assumption, not only unsupported by, but utterly opposed to, facts.

While the importance of his co-operation, in itself, has been magnified out of all conceivable proportion, its importance, so far as it regarded the safety of the third division, is of a purely imaginary nature. The

critical situation in which they stood—the imminent danger from which they are supposed to have been rescued by the timely interposition of the fifth, are rested by Colonel Napier on the belief that, at the time Leith came forward, the position of the third had been gained by the enemy, who were overhanging the reverse side of the Sierra; while the greatest part of the third division, British and Portuguese, were fully engaged at the time. Critical enough, heaven knows, had it been placed in this dilemma. But what is the truth? and I would particularly beg Colonel Napier's attention to the facts, as showing how very erroneous has been the information on which he has proceeded in drawing his conclusions. So far from the greater part of the third division, British and Portuguese, being fully engaged in active contest with the enemy at the time that Leith advanced to meet their last attack—not a Frenchman stood then upon the height but as a prisoner of war—those of the third who had been engaged in the earlier operations of the day were then resting on their arms, and had been so for hours, ready, if required, to do again what they had done so well before; while the brigade of Portuguese guns, under Major Arentchild, never moved from their station on the right throughout the day.

Colonel Napier must, further, feel that his whole ground goes from under him, as to the supposed danger of the third division, from their being so entirely occupied as to render them unable to defend themselves from this attack, when he learns that a considerable portion of it, consisting of Lightburne's brigade, under the command of Sir Brent Spencer, but stationed immediately on Picton's left—with the exception, Mr. Editor, of the light company of the 5th Regiment, commanded by yourself—never found an opportunity throughout the whole of the operations to fire a single shot. This, certainly, could not have

been the case had their comrades of the third been in the jeopardy Colonel Napier has supposed, burning with eagerness, as we know they were, to emulate their more fortunate companions, and share with them the glory of the day. Seeing, therefore, that the third were so entirely disengaged—and yet, that none of them took part in this affair, except the 74th British Regiment, and some of the Portuguese, who, while the column was met and repulsed by Leith, advanced against a body, which at the same time threatened our position by the St. Antonio Pass—these, with the other reasons assigned, justify the conclusion that the affair itself was not of the importance he imagines, and was determined without the necessity of a more general interposition on the part of the third division.

So much, then, for the critical situation of the third —so much for the forcing and the breaking of their centre—so much for the turning of their right- so much for the incalculable service supposed to have been rendered to them by the fifth division—and so much for the chance of Picton having had a different story to relate, as to the glory of his troops, than he was left to tell by the favour of fortune and the assistance of the fifth!

To the whole I answer, that if there ever was a time when there was a risk of anything being told to the disadvantage of the third, truly it was not at Busaco that their laurels were in danger.

If their credit was not there in any way endangered by any want of courage or by inefficiency in themselves, equally remote from fact is the impression that it was placed in danger upon this occasion by any incapacity or blunder of their leader. To blame Sir Thomas Picton, as Colonel Cameron does, for leaving his right exposed—that is, for it can mean nothing else, for not resting it on a position naturally strong—is, under the circumstances, absurd. It was, in fact, protected, as

far as the case would admit; and there was no natural *point d'appui* nearer than the banks of the Mondego, nearly four miles distant.

That Picton occupied the ground he was commanded by Lord Wellington to take—that his right neither was turned by the enemy, nor ever was in the slightest danger of being turned—and that the troops which he commanded afforded the most essential service that was rendered during the operations of the day, upon this portion of the ridge—form the only vindication which he can require.

Thus, Mr. Editor, I have, as I conceive, brought forward sufficient evidence to convince your readers, that the account given by Colonel Napier in his work, and in the several letters of Sir John Cameron and Colonel Waller, presumed to be corroborative of that account, are chargeable with inaccuracies more or less injurious to several of the parties that were there engaged.

As having been so long a member of a corps, subject, I may say, to a systematic course of injustice at the hands of Sir Thomas Picton, it cannot be supposed that I am in any way in danger of being unduly partial to the memory of that commander. I am sure, however, that, in expressing my own, I express the feeling of every officer of the 88th, when I declare, that no resentment for injuries received from him could lead me to acquiesce in any obloquy that may be thrown upon him where it was not deserved. Such, however, would be the case did I not come forward to assert that the several documents in question are fraught with injustice to his memory: charging him with faults in the disposition and employment of his troops, which, even supposing they were proved to have been errors, and which has not been proved, could be chargeable only to his superiors in command. In the second place, I have shown that injustice has been

done to a portion of the 8th Regiment of Portuguese, in stating in so unqualified a manner that they were broken to pieces—one portion of them, at least, having maintained their ground.

In the next place, I have shown, that to the third division, as a whole, the gallant author is exceedingly unjust. Misinformed as to the real characteristics of the battle connected with the position occupied by them, he has painted as one grand fight and general engagement, on the summit of the Sierra, what should have been represented as a series of bold and strenuous, but unavailing, efforts of the enemy to gain possession of the summit. By employing the expression—"Meanwhile the French who first established themselves on the heights," and immediately proceeding to expel them by the agency of Leith, he has rendered it impossible for the reader's mind to separate the earlier, main, and leading features of the day, from what everything concurs to prove was but a subordinate affair—the last expiring effort of the foe.

It is by these mistakes as to the real nature of the contest, or rather contests, with the enemy, and by thus confounding operations in themselves distinct, as to actors, place, and time, that he is enabled to give the fifth division the credit of saving the third from overthrow, when it was never in the slightest danger. It is by similar means that he has given the fifth a share in repelling the earlier and principal attacks made by the enemy on this portion of the line, and repulsed by the third alone, without the slightest assistance being required from, and far less rendered by, the fifth, which entered upon the ground where alone they met the enemy after the fortune of the day, in every essential point, had been determined.

I say it, Sir, from no invidious feeling, for I believe sincerely that they, and every other portion of the British troops, not only did, but did well, all that was

required of them upon that day. I leave it, however, for you and for your readers to determine, if it is not a case of hardship, that a division whose total loss, in the whole share of the operations they were called upon to take, amounted only to nine rank and file killed, and two officers, two serjeants, thirty-four rank and file, wounded—the loss of the 9th British Regiment, which by all concurring testimony had the greatest share in this affair, amounting only to five rank and file killed, and one officer, one serjeant, and seventeen rank and file wounded, should have equal credit with, I might say greater honour done them than, the 3rd, who bore the heat and burden of the day—witness the superiority of the loss which they sustained, twenty-two officers, five sergeants, and three hundred and fourteen rank and file, independent of the loss sustained by Portuguese attached to the division, viz. fifteen officers and two hundred and fifty rank and file.

Comparisons, Mr. Editor, are proverbially odious; and it is peculiarly painful to be compelled to draw them to the disadvantage of those who have undoubted claims on our respect; but, Sir, when we are told that "the third division would have been in so critical a situation but for the assistance of the fifth;" and again —"if assistance, and British assistance, too, had not come to their aid, their General might have cut a different figure in the despatch to what he did;" when it is further boldly stated—"that others wear the laurels which belong in justice to the fifth," is it possible for the former to submit in silence? Can the third be blamed if they are roused by these assertions? —can they be accused of egotism, if, "fighting their battles o'er again, they show how fields were won," proving, as they can, that the laurels which they wear are all their own, gained by their own good swords, which left them no occasion to beg, to borrow, or to

filch from others. It must be acknowledged to be galling to their feelings that an attempt should now be made to strip them of a wreath which they have so long and so deservedly enjoyed. It is the more annoying, that in this particular instance, they are to be denuded of the honours to which they are entitled, that they may be bestowed on those who, although deserving of a better fortune, only came in to glean the field, more plentifully reaped by their more fortunate precursors.

In the fourth and last place, Mr. Editor, after what I have stated in the preceding observations, need I specify to yourself or readers the nature of the feelings with which I read the following passage from Colonel Napier's work? Following up his account of the enemy's first attack, he proceeds to say—"The leading battalions immediately established themselves amongst the crowning rocks, and a confused mass wheeled to the right, intending to sweep the summit of the Sierra; but at that moment Lord Wellington caused two guns to open with grape upon their flank, a heavy musketry was still poured into their front, and in a little time the 45th and 88th Regiments charged so furiously that even fresh men could not have withstood them. The French, quite spent with their previous efforts, only opened a straggling fire, and both parties went down the mountain side," &c.

What meaning, Mr. Editor, do I ask, can be attached to this, more especially, when taken in connexion with the previous, but most erroneous account of the nature of the opposition to which this column had been subjected in ascending the acclivity, but, that Colonel Napier himself believes, and means to impress his readers with the conviction, that the service rendered upon this occasion by the 88th, and the four companies of the 45th, was limited entirely to the beating back a portion of the enemy that was not

composed of fresh men? In other words, it is his belief that they only beat back men spent, as he says, with their previous efforts—jaded, worn out, and on the point of yielding to the opposition they had previously met. Thus would it appear that these two corps only came in to reap a victory already rendered easy by the prowess of others. Had there been anything to justify Colonel Napier's description—had the French, in scaling the mountain, experienced opposition requiring astonishing power and resolution to overcome—had they then forced the right of the third division back, broken the 8th Portuguese to pieces, gained the highest part of the crest with their hostile masses—had they established their leading battalions among the crowning rocks—had a heavy musketry been continued to be poured into their front—had they gone through all this, before they were met and charged by these two regiments, Colonel Napier might have had some excuse for characterising it as a charge which even fresh men could not have withstood. There might, in this case, have been some colour for the comparatively negative credit which he has left them of defeating the French quite spent with their previous efforts, and only opening a straggling fire: all, certainly, calculated to convey to the reader's mind any thing but an impression of any vigorous effort being required to overcome them.

Let me only then recapitulate the simple facts, that the column of the enemy to which his observations are intended to apply, was in reality composed of fresh men, who, for the reasons stated above, had met with little or no opposition in their ascent—who previously had no continued fire of musketry poured into their front—no part of which could be characterised as a confused mass. On the contrary, they were a column composed of the very elite of the French troops, the leading battalions being their 2nd Light

Infantry, 36th Grenadiers, and 70th of the Line; and with the exception of that portion of them that occupied the rocks before alluded to, and which only made their assault more formidable, advancing in one firm, compact, and unbroken force, when they were charged so gallantly, at the moment that their heads appeared, and defeated by the 88th Regiment under Colonel Wallace, and the four companies of the 45th under Major Gwynne; and with the exception of the aid rendered by the 8th Portuguese in the pursuit, without the assistance of a single man of any other corps.

Misconceived so far in its details, and mixed up with less important operations, I assert, Mr. Editor, that the account of Colonel Napier is decidedly unjust to the officers and men of these distinguished corps. Consider the nature of the service which they rendered; consider that this attack was the first that the enemy had made upon this portion of the line. While the manner in which it was met and repelled by them, went so far, by its result, to determine the ultimate success and issue of the battle. Take into account that the rendering of this service was by them effected at a loss of no less than sixteen officers, seven serjeants, and two hundred and sixty-one men, killed and wounded. Compare what Colonel Napier says of them with what he says of others, who neither did so much, or at so great a cost, and I leave any impartial person to determine if, in Colonel Napier's work, the gallant bearing of these two corps stands forward in the bold, and prominent, and commanding manner which in bare justice it has a right to do.

What was in itself pre-eminently the fight on this portion of the line, is mentioned by him in such a manner as to give it the appearance of a subordinate incident in the fight. Involving it, as he has done, in the tumult and confusion of a general engagement, he has rendered it impossible to recognize that spot—

"where Greek met Greek, there came the tug of war."

I ask if his description does what it ought to signalize a conflict, brief, it is true, in its duration, but, while it lasted, contested so fiercely on the part of their opponents; and, notwithstanding the infinite superiority of numbers of the enemy, with a courage and determination so great, so irresistible on theirs, as to draw from Wellington himself, who was spectator of the combat, that memorable burst of admiration—"*There, Beresford, look at them now!*" This certainly was an open expression of his approbation, which, whatever he might feel, was as rare from him, as, when coming as it did from the first of Generals, and first of judges of all military merit, it was honourable to those on whom it was bestowed.

Having had the honour to belong to one of these, I am sure that Colonel Napier will excuse the very pardonable jealousy with which I now come forward to vindicate their claims, and to guard against anything that could possibly endanger their special right to words, which, as they equally shared the gallantry that called them forth, ought, in my own humble opinion, to be interwoven in the colours, and in letters of gold, emblazoned in the records of these two corps, as the proudest distinction they could possibly attain.

More, Mr. Editor, I need not add, confident, as I am, that the facts which I have stated must be sufficient to open Colonel Napier's eyes, and to let a new light in upon him. I rest in the assurance that the gallant author, in preparing for his next edition, will revise the details of this important battle, and willingly repair what he must now perceive to be his great, though I believe sincerely, his unintentional injustice.

WILLIAM MACKIE, Major Unat.,
formerly of 88th Regt.

No. II.

REPLY TO "OBSERVATIONS ON SOME PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF SIR THOMAS PICTON." *

Mr. Editor,—I had hoped that the very reason which you have assigned for not reviewing the life of Sir Thomas Picton, would have spared me the necessity of again entering the field of contention respecting its merits; but as the author of that work, I cannot allow the comments of your correspondent M. (in your last number) to pass unnoticed. You say, "It is now too late to review a work which has been so long before the public." If, Sir, it is too late to review it, is it not too late to cavil at its contents? and may I venture to inquire, by what fortuitous circumstance your correspondent arrived at the conclusion, that the two points upon which he dwells in his communication call for so elaborate a criticism? Has he only just read the work? or has he had no earlier opportunity of expressing his opinion? He says, that he has "lately read the Memoirs of Lieut.-Gen. Sir T. Picton, recently published;" now the work was published in September, and the second edition in December; consequently, your correspondent has taken an unreasonably long period to concoct his ideas, and I begin to suspect that I shall have to keep up a running fire with all ranks of the Peninsular army, from Serjeant-Majors to Lieutenant-Generals, unto my dying day. I feel flattered, Sir, by your remark, which, with true author-like vanity, I will take leave to repeat; that, bating some errors of detail and erroneous conclusions, to be referred to my want of experience and to misinformation, I have "compiled these Memoirs with zeal, industry, and intelligence."

Now, Sir, I beg to inform you, and the public, through your valuable Periodical, that since my com-

* From the United Service Journal.

mencement of the Life of Sir Thomas Picton, I have gained a considerable portion of military experience; I have discovered that no two individuals, who have served in the same affair, ever give the same accounts of its details—that sometimes their statements only differ in a trifling degree—at others widely—while in some they are totally opposite. I assert this, Sir, from doleful experience. My opportunities were extensive, but my disappointments numerous; frequently, after listening to a continuous narrative of events which, by the readiness of their birth, had every appearance of being "the only true and particular account," upon attempting to put them to the corroborative test of contemporaneous statements, they have either been totally put *hors de combat*, or so shaken as to be rendered unfit for historical purposes; and so frequently was I thus led to be dissatisfied and to reject the evidences of the actors in the different fields where the Lion was triumphant, that I began to wonder from what sources an authentic history of the Peninsular war could be compiled. And this conviction is indelibly fixed in my mind—that no history of the war can be produced, which will not call forth comment and contradiction from some of the numerous actors who witnessed those events with different eyes and feelings; and all that can be said respecting these varied and frequently opposite statements is—what I have already remarked in my Introduction to the Life of Sir Thomas Picton—that "they contribute to that mass of materials from which, hereafter, when all inducement to partial praise or censure shall have ceased, an adequate history may be drawn of that eventful period." But let it not, for one moment, be imagined that I have made these observations with the slightest disrespect to that service, of which the noble subject of my labours was so bright an example; my respect for the army, and those who fought by Picton's side,

is as sincere as my devotion to the name and character of my hero. Again, it might appear that I am ungrateful to those distinguished individuals, to whom I am so much indebted for the interest they took in my exertions, and the valuable assistance which they afforded me in completing the work. I beg that they will acquit me of forgetfulness or ingratitude, and admit the following reasons for what I have asserted:—

Any thinking man, without ever having heard a shot pass within whizzing distance of his head, will freely admit that the report of an officer respecting a battle will depend, in a great measure, upon his rank in the army—for upon his rank depends his situation, and upon his situation the power of making observations. For example, the officers of a company will be enabled to report when the company or battalion opened fire, when they ceased, when the enemy ran after them, or they ran after the enemy; but this constitutes no portion of the description of a general engagement, and in addressing myself to you, Sir, I have no doubt you will readily admit, from practical knowledge, that a regimental officer, when surrounded by the smoke and roar of the musketry while firing and under fire, has, if he does his duty, very little time or opportunity to make any observations upon the general movements of the army, or even the division to which his regiment is attached: yet, at a distant day, when the battle is over, and he is once more snug in his club or amongst his old cronies, he will give you—because he was there—every movement that took place during the day, from personal observation. Now, this individual, in nine instances out of ten, states only what he has heard, read, or understood, yet from a constant habit of repeating the same story and sticking to the same points, he becomes a downright champion for the truth of his statements.

Let us now get a step higher—to the staff. Here we may obtain a great deal of correct information, for they are moving about in the rear, watching the different dispositions—reporting the impressions made upon, or by the enemy: still but few staff officers are enabled to give an accurate detail of the movements; as aides-de-camp, they are hurrying in all directions without time to pause or inquire, frequently obliged to hasten forward to a distant part of the field at the most vital moment upon which the fate of the day depends; upon their return the feature of the battle is changed, they know not why or when, and, before they can obtain any information, are again dispatched to the opposite extremity of the position; until, at the end of the fray, they know which has gained the day, but not the various manœuvres which led to that result. But the General-in-chief, or General of Division, must know every movement and disposition of his part of the field; and, Sir, I maintain that, if he be ignorant where any one regiment is (and this is a moderately broad basis) at any one time during the battle, he will inevitably betray this omission, to the serious detriment of his position, and the fate of the day.*

Your correspondent roundly asserts that Picton did not know where the 88th Regiment was, the night previous to the battle of Busaco. Now, Mr. Editor,

* This is a strong assertion, but it is not borne out by facts. Had Colonel Wallace remained with the 88th Regiment in the position he had been placed by General Picton, the battle, at this point at least, would have been lost; but Wallace did no such thing. He moved his corps *from* the place General Picton had placed it, advanced against the French column, completely overthrew it, and decided the battle. Of all this, Picton was as ignorant, *at the time,* as his biographer. While Wallace was occupied as has been described, Picton's hands were full at the "St. Antonio pass," and he could not be (as an Irishman once said,) "like a bird, in *two* places at the same time."—AUTHOR.

I can forgive any of your correspondents who like to abuse me, or call me anything that a gentleman may hear, but I cannot allow Picton's fame to be tarnished by a breath of reproach. I have brought his memory and reputation again before the world; I dare to hope that I have placed his name in the next niche to that of his mighty leader. For that of Wellington must stand alone; and I cannot calmly witness the efforts of subaltern spleen, or over-wrought *esprit de corps*, to wrest from his memory one iota of that reputation which he so dearly bought. Perhaps a more serious accusation could not be brought against a General of Division, than to assert that he was ignorant of the precise situation of one of his regiments; it is as bad as to accuse the Duke of Wellington of not knowing in what part of the field "the fighting division" was disposed; and may I, Sir, beg to know who this officer is who ventures to bring this accusation against Sir Thomas Picton? To which of the three classes did he belong at that period? Was he in the line, on the staff, or in command of a brigade, that he presumes to contradict General Picton in his reiterated assertion—that he detached the 88th Regiment to the left the night previous to the battle? Indeed, Sir, if we are to admit your correspondent's contradiction, we must accuse Sir Thomas Picton of having possessed a most fertile and fallacious memory; for, more than a fortnight after the occurrence, we find him writing to the Commander-in-chief his reasons for so doing, in the following words:—"There being an unoccupied space, of considerably above a mile, between my left and Sir Brent Spencer's division, immediately after sunset (when it could not be observed by the enemy), I detached Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace with the 88th Regiment to take up an intermediate position, and communicate with the hill of Busaco and the main body of my division at the pass of St. Antonio."

In confirmation of this remark, if any be considered necessary, a little further on in the same report he observes—"A few minutes after, when the day began to clear up, a smart firing of musketry was heard on the left, apparently proceeding from the point where the 88th Regiment had been stationed." These observations are again repeated in his letter to Colonel Pleydel, consequently Picton must either have been deceived into the belief that the 88th Regiment had moved to the left according to his orders, or else the regiment was there; for, after these remarks, no person who has any belief at all, can doubt but that Picton imagined the regiment was where he states. I have said more than I originally intended upon this subject, but as it appears to me the only part of your correspondent's letter which at all touches the character of Sir Thomas Picton, I have given it my particular attention. Your correspondent's remarks respecting the battle are made with judgment, and I readily bow to his presumed "military experience," although I have little difficulty in reconciling the statements to which he objects as confused and contradictory.

The "rocky point," which is so often mentioned by me in the work, is the rocky point alluded to by General Picton in his report to the Duke of Wellington, which, the General says, was situated "about halfway between the pass of St. Antonio and the hill of Busaco." My reason for so frequently reverting to this point is to disprove Colonel Napier's assertion, that it was on the right of Picton's position, and not to imply that it was the only "rocky point" in the line; for there may be, and I believe are, a great many, although it may be presumed that this point was particularly marked from the others, by Picton using the term "high" in its designation.

Your correspondent then charges General Picton with what the General, in his letter to the Duke of

Wellington, most positively denies. I allude to repulsing the enemy's *first attack* upon the position occupied by the 88th and 45th Regiments; and if your correspondent will again peruse the General's letter to the Duke, I feel confident that his good sense will enable him to discover that Picton, when he speaks of the gallant charge made by those two regiments, and disavows the merit of leading them, adding that he was actively engaged at the pass—I say, that when your correspondent re-peruses these passages in conjunction with the subsequent remark, that "a smart firing was heard on the left, where the 88th Regiment was stationed," that he will be satisfied that Picton *did not lead the first charge* made on the left, but that he was personally concerned in repulsing the *second attack* made by the enemy upon this point of his position. With respect to the light companies of the 74th and 88th Regiments retiring in disorder, perhaps the less this point is discussed the better. Your correspondent says, they were "retiring in extended order," but doubtless Picton thought the movement more resembled extended *disorder*; and we know the licence of light infantry movements to be so great, that an actual helter-skelter may afterwards be expressed by some military term implying order.

Your champion for—and I suspect of—the 88th Regiment, has ably conducted their defence; I am not prepared, neither am I inclined, to bring forward any fresh arguments in support of the remarks contained in "The Life of Sir Thomas Picton" respecting this brave regiment; indeed, sir, I would rather not have lent my aid in stigmatizing that or any other corps, but what I have stated, I received from a number of distinguished officers, as well able to judge, and more impartial than your correspondent, who, with proper candour, admits that his remarks are not made

"without some feeling of *esprit de corps.*"* Colonel Wallace might have done much whilst the work was in progress, to vindicate his old corps from their so often repeated reproach; for I requested him most earnestly to favour me with his assistance, but unfortunately I received no reply to my communication, which I freely attributed to his advanced years. Your correspondent says, that General Picton gave the regiment a bad name; but the inference to be drawn from this assertion is rather unfortunate, for Picton was a strict disciplinarian, at the same time that he had a strong sense of justice: consequently, if he gave it a bad name, we are bound to think that it was deserved; and the statement of your correspondent, that Picton convened a dinner to express his regret to Colonel Wallace for the injustice that he had done his regiment, is by far too *ex parte* and improbable to be received upon any other authority than as a report.†

Your correspondent, in concluding his remarks, has fallen into a very common error, and one which I fortunately saw in time to avoid, before I commenced the Memoir. I allude to the failing so prevalent in compiling similar works. The author falls in love with the character of his hero—in consequence, tries throughout to portray him without faults, and as much like the immaculate hero of a romance as the humanity of the man will admit. But this is not doing either the subject of the Memoir, or the public, justice; for

* Will Mr. Robinson favour me with the name of *one officer* (out of this host of "distinguished officers,") who will bear him out in his assertion about the "coloured wood."—AUTHOR.

† This may be very true, but Mr. Robinson cannot make the same charge against me, because, in an early page of this volume, he will find a correct statement of the fact; and, so far from any friend of the late Sir Thomas Picton seeking to contradict it, he should either admit it or be silent,—for the entire affair was most creditable to the General.—AUTHOR.

it is misrepresenting the one, and misleading the other. In conclusion, sir, I have to return thanks to your correspondent for having invited into the field all who ever served with Sir Thomas Picton, that I may have an opportunity of keeping my pen in exercise, and the events of the Peninsular war continued in my recollection.*

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

H. B. ROBINSON.

London, April, 1836.

* This is extremely facetious on the part of Mr. Robinson, but not quite grave or dignified enough for the historian of Sir Thomas Picton. However, *chacun a son gout.* But, *has* Mr. Robinson fulfilled his promise and kept his "pen in exercise?" In the month of October, 1836, I addressed a letter to the editor of the U. S. Journal. In that letter, which was published the same month, I gave a flat contradiction to some of Mr. Robinson's statements; I affixed my name to that letter, and I challenged Mr. Robinson to produce proof of what he stated in his history. From that hour to the present I have never read one line from Mr. Robinson in reply, and, so far from keeping his "pen in exercise," I begin to suspect he has laid it aside—as Picton's champion at least—altogether.—AUTHOR.

No. III.

To the Editor of the United Service Journal.

"But in justice to the living as well as the dead."

"Neither at Rodrigo nor Badajoz did General Picton head his division."

"Badajoz one of the most astonishing exploits mentioned in history."

"The brave Lieutenant Mackie, 88th Regiment, who at Rodrigo so gallantly volunteered and bravely led the forlorn-hope of the third division, notwithstanding the promises of General Mackinnon, which ought to have been held sacred, was altogether passed over by General Picton."

"No officer of the 88th Regiment was ever promoted through the recommendation of General Picton."

Mr. Editor,—The above extracts and the sentiments therein contained being continued to the present time, call forth "justice to the dead as well as the living," and therefore I beg leave to express my reliance on General Picton's honour, and that he actually did earnestly recommend to the commander of the forces every officer of the third division who merited it; and if they were not in consequence promoted or otherwise rewarded, that should be ascribed to the cause of the total disregard and wholly unanswered repeated recommendations of General Picton in favour of his own aide-de-camp, though most justly due to the General as well as the sufferer, a fine young man, who was so dreadfully wounded as not to be again fit for service. He lives; which proves an inattention to the claims of General Picton, for himself, his personal staff, and his division (so prover-

bially true,) as living individuals of the division can attest.

General Picton *did* bravely head his division; and at Badajoz, and far in the fire, fell wounded in the foot on the left side of General Kempt, in the approach to the mill-dam on the memorable 6th of April, 1812. When be it proclaimed! Badajoz was taken by the third division, having escalladed and established itself in the castle previously, according to General Picton's own proposition, and "which was one of the most astonishing exploits mentioned in history."

It will be recollected that General Mackinnon was blown up by the mine at Rodrigo; he could not, therefore, subsequently communicate to General Picton the promise he is said to have made to Lieutenant Mackie.

Again, *United Service Journal, May*, 1833, *page* 53: —"The brave Captain Oates, so far from being recommended, was not even noticed by General Picton for his gallant conduct at Fort Picurina."

Fort Picurina was undoubtedly the key of Badajoz, which was the door opened by the escalade of General Picton's division for Lord Wellington's subsequent success!

A Soldier of the Third Division.

14th of June, 1833.

No. IV.

Mr. Editor,—I have, in my narrative of the storming of Rodrigo, said what General Picton did not do; namely, that he did not notice Lieutenant William Mackie, of the 88th. I shall now say what, in my opinion, he ought to have done.

On the morning of the 20th of January, 1812, the day after the capture of Rodrigo, he should have sent for Lieutenant Mackie, and taken him by the hand and brought him to Gallegos, the head-quarters of Lord Wellington, and said,—"My Lord, this is the young man who so gallantly led the forlorn-hope of my division last night. He is an officer of first-rate merit,—is the senior lieutenant of his regiment,—and I beg your Lordship will notice him." Had he done so, would he have done too much? because Mackie was a hero in the very essence of the word, and not only General Picton, but every soldier in the third division, knew him to be such; for it was not his leading the forlorn-hope at Rodrigo, gallantly as he volunteered his services on that memorable night, that Mackie had to depend upon to ground his claims to the notice of his General. His conduct at Busaco, at the head of the battalion-men of the 88th, who supported the riflemen of the third division, should have gained him a company! at Rodrigo he ought to have been a major!! at Badajoz, a lieutenant-colonel!!! But what is he now, after a lapse of twenty-three years? A captain, without so much as a medal to mark his gallant—his chivalrous services!

Had the General of his division done as I have said, is it likely that Lord Wellington would have turned a deaf ear to such an appeal? But if he did, surely the General might have issued a division order, expressive of his sense of the services of Lieutenant

Mackie; or he might, in presence of his division, have declared his approbation of his conduct; and General Picton never wanted words, when it suited him to give his opinions on a division parade. No, no: the defence attempted to be set up is not maintainable. General Picton had but one course to pursue; namely, to recommend Lieutenant Mackie to the notice of Lord Wellington; and if that failed – or whether it did or not – to notice him himself. In a word, Mackie was one of the bravest and one of the most ill-treated men in the world.

As to the death of General Mackinnon, and the consequent failure of his promise, it is equally untenable. Is it to be supposed that a general who commanded and arranged the attack of his division did not know the name of the officer who led the forlorn-hope of it? And let it not for a moment be supposed that in anything I have written I seek for more than justice—even-handed justice—to the officers and men of the 88th Regiment.

If Lieutenant Gurwood, of the 52nd, was entitled to promotion for his gallant conduct—and who will say that he was not?—surely Lieutenant Mackie, of the 88th, is equally entitled to the same favour. Major Manners, of the 74th—belonging, like Mackie, to *Mackinnon's brigade*—led the storming party, *which Mackie preceded with his forlorn-hope!* and gained promotion in consequence! How will "A Soldier in the third Division" account for this? Mackinnon's death ought to have barred *both* or *neither!*

He says, that "the sentiments therein contained," (alluding, of course, to what I have written,) being continued to the present time, call forth "justice to the dead as well as the living;"—no doubt they do, and why not? But how will he account for the *promotion* of Manners and the *neglect* of Mackie, both belonging—if we are to cavil about the thing, which,

by the way, is only childish—to the brigade of Mackinnon!

Does he know that the 88th, independent of what I have before said, have been denied the badge of the battle of the Pyrenees on their colours, and that the 45th and 74th, *belonging to the same brigade!* are allowed to bear it? Can he give any reason for this slight? Can any of General Picton's staff—I will take Colonel Stovin for an example—give a reason why it is so? He cannot, I believe, no more than any one else.* If he will inquire at the Horse Guards, he will be told by Lord Fitzroy Somerset, that the 88th cannot be allowed the badge of a battle—in which their conduct was marked as being gallant—because the General commanding the third division did not recommend the officer commanding the 88th for a medal! Is this "justice to the living?" Is this justice to the brave 88th? I think not.

The object I have in writing as I have done, is not meant in any way to throw a slur on any particular General; they are, to me, all alike. What I wish for is to uphold the character of my regiment, the 88th; all that I seek for is the same favours for them as have been granted to others—and to have them placed in the same position. I seek for no additional mark—I claim no precedence for that corps; all I ask for is *justice!* This is all that is sought for, this is all that is expected;—with that the 88th ought to be satisfied—but with nothing less!

I never imputed any blame to General Picton for not leading on his division at the assaults of Rodrigo or Badajoz; on the contrary, I praised him for not doing so. He arranged and directed both attacks with his usual talent; conducted them with his usual skill; but he was not rash enough to *head* them, well

See Appendix, vol. I., page 324.

knowing that his directions were of more consequence, and that in the hands of Brigadiers or Colonels, his men were as likely to do their duty, without the chance of their chief being cut off in a station that would have been better filled by a common soldier. And the circumstance of General Picton being wounded at the "Mill-dam," is conclusive, and bears me out in what I have said.

If General Picton fell wounded at the mill-dam on the river Rivellas, some hundred yards from the castle wall, it is manifest that he could not, as I before said —*he did not*—head his men at the assault. But in saying what I did say, and which I still assert as a fact, that neither at Rodrigo nor Badajoz did the General head his men, I meant nothing derogatory to General Picton, but wished merely to prove how well soldiers could act under their own commanding officers. If the object of a "Soldier of the third division" was to prove that General Picton headed his division at the assault of the castle of Badajoz, his own letter is a disproval of the fact; for he says that "General Picton did bravely head his division, and far in the fire fell wounded in the foot on the left side of General Kempt, in the approach to the mill-dam on the memorable 6th of April, 1812."

Now, General Kempt, who is still alive, and who, according to this authority, fell wounded at the same time General Picton did, namely, at the mill-dam, will scarcely lay claim to the glory of having headed his brigade at the assault of the castle. Taking it for granted that Picton and Kempt both fell wounded at this point, who was the General that led on the third division to the assault of the castle? There was no General excepting these two in the division; they both were disabled, long before the division reached the point of attack. It was owing to the bravery of such men as the gallant Colonel Ridge, and Captain

Canch, of the 5th, Lieutenant Bowles of the 83rd, and Mackie—the gallant Mackie—of the 88th, the place was taken at all; and so far I am, I think, borne out in the opinion I gave of the folly of generals placing themselves at the head of their men at an assault, when the duty could be as well performed by subordinate officers.

In conclusion, he quotes a passage from my adventures, and I must confess that I can in no way understand the meaning of it;—it is this: "The brave Captain Oates, so far from being recommended, was not even noticed by General Picton for his gallant conduct at Fort Picurina;" and by way, I suppose, of putting a stop to any further "extracts, and the sentiments therein contained," he adds, "Fort Picurina was undoubtedly the key to Badajoz, which was the door opened by the escalade of General Picton's division for Lord Wellington's subsequent success!!!"

Every person at all acquainted with the siege of Badajoz will admit this fact;—but what has it to do with the shameful neglect of Captain Oates?—Nothing. Oates deserved notice and promotion. General Picton could not promote him, but he could have recommended him!—he could have noticed him!! Did he do either the one or the other? This is the point at issue.

As for Badajoz having been taken by the third division, I am not so sure that the fifth division would not lay claim to a portion of the glory. In anything I have written, I have, I believe, given the third division their meed of praise. He may do better than I have done for them, and I hope the survivors of the "fighting division" will believe me sincere when I say that I shall feel happy when such a man as "A Soldier of the third division" will place their imperishable deeds in a more distinguished point of

view than I have been able to accomplish by my feeble efforts.

Dublin, Nov. 20, 1833.

The foregoing letter was written by the author to the editor of the *U. S. Journal.*

Royal Hospital, 20th July, 1830.

My dear O'Malley,—I wish it were in my power to give you any satisfactory reason why the officer in command of the 88th Regiment did not obtain the medal for the "Pyrenees," but I have no document in my possession which can lead to any elucidation of the cause which withheld that distinction.

That the Regiment performed its duty in the usual gallant style which always reflected so much honour on their services, I am most ready to attest as far as my observation could command, and I should consider it equally entitled to the distinction you solicit, with the 45th and 74th Regiments; indeed, on the 28th. when Soult made his great effort against the left of our position, the 88th were the only part of the third division engaged, and it was in the pursuit of the enemy after that day that the whole division co-operated, when, by rapidity of march, and some skilful flank movements through the mountains, they succeeded in securing a number of prisoners.

I am quite ignorant of Lieut.-Colonel MacPherson's present residence, who might furnish such information as would forward the object of your desire, in which I sincerely wish you success, and wish I could in any way contribute to it.

Ever, my dear O'Malley,
Yours, &c. &c.,
(Signed) FREDK. STOVIN.

To Lieut.-Colonel O'Malley, 88th Regiment.

To His Excellency General Earl Wellington, K.B., Commander of the Forces, &c. &c.

THE MEMORIAL OF LIEUTENANT W. MACKIE, 88TH REGIMENT.

Sheweth,—That memorialist, as a volunteer, led the advance of the storming party of the third division at the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, on the 19th of January, That memorialist with his party arrived at the citadel before the advance of the light division under Lieutenant Gurwood; that your memorialist is now senior Lieutenant of the 88th Regiment, and has served in this country since March 1809, and that memorialist has never been absent from his regiment.

Memorialist therefore begs from the foregoing circumstances that Your Excellency will take his case into consideration for promotion.

(Signed) W. M.

The above forwarded through Sir James Kempt, at Elvas. —1812.

London, 11th May, 1816.

Dear Sir,—"I have the most perfect recollection of your having forwarded through me, shortly after my taking the command of a brigade in the third division, a memorial stating your services, and particularly mentioning your having led the advance of the storming party of the third division, at the attack of Ciudad Rodrigo, and I am quite convinced from the estimation that the late Sir Thomas Picton, then commanding the division, had of your conduct and services on that occasion, and the manner in which he brought your merits to the notice of the Duke of Wellington, that some special mark of favour would have been conferred upon you, if you had not, almost

immediately afterwards, been promoted to a company as the senior Lieutenant of the 88th regiment.

Your conduct also at the siege of Badajoz, in which you were engaged in operations under my immediate command, impressed me with a very favourable opinion of your merits.

(Signed) J. KEMPT, M.G.

To Capt. Mackie.

London, 11th Dec., 1830.

Sir,—Major Mackie, late of the 88th Regiment, informs me he has never received any mark of distinction for having volunteered, and conducted the forlorn hope to the main breach in the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo, in consequence of his not having been recommended at the moment, which, I believe, proceeded from General Mackinnon being killed at the time. Major Mackie's conduct on all occasions was so truly meritorious, and I have no doubt that he calculated on receiving, as a matter of course, promotion, if he succeeded, as you immediately succeeded, and took the command of the brigade which he served with. I beg leave to say that you will forward the interest, and do justice to one of the most gallant officers in the service, if you will point out to the Commander-in-Chief the service Major Mackie performed on that occasion, as I have no doubt he will then receive that mark of approbation which has always been granted to officers and non-commissioned officers who have successfully performed a similar service.

I have the honour to be,
Yours very faithfully,
J. A. WALLACE, M.G.

Right Hon. Sir James Kempt, &c.

I certify that Captain William Mackie (then Lieutenant), of the 88th Regiment, volunteered, and led the advance of the storming party, at the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, in Spain, under my command.

(Signed) RUSSELL MANNERS,
Lieut.-Col. and Major 74th Regt.

Whetstone, Middlesex,
Feb. 11, 1816.

The original of the above certificate was transmitted to the Horse Guards in June, 1816.

I certify that Captain Mackie, of the 88th Regiment, served in the brigade under my command in the campaign of 1812, and particularly distinguished himself by the great zeal, activity, and intelligence, which he displayed in the performance of his various duties.

I also certify that upon my joining the third division, immediately after the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, Lieut.-General Sir Thomas Picton, then commanding the division, pointed out Captain Mackie to me as the officer who led the forlorn hope in the assault of the main breach, which the third division carried, and that he particularly distinguished himself on that occasion.

(Signed) JAMES KEMPT, M.G.

London, 26th March, 1820.

Edinburgh, 17th Jan., 1820.

Dear Sir,—Captain Mackie, of the 88th Regiment, has expressed to me his intention of forwarding a memorial to His Royal Highness, the Commander-in-Chief, for some special mark of favour in consideration of his services during the late war, and his

hopes, as you commanded (for some time,) the brigade which he served in, and the kind interest you took in forwarding a former memorial for him, that you may be inclined to give your countenance to the application he is now about to make; he has, therefore, requested me to state to you my opinion of his conduct, as having commanded the regiment, which, I hope, will plead my excuse for now troubling you.

I beg leave to assure you that Captain Mackie's conduct has, on all occasions, most fully merited any recommendation I can give. At the battle of Busaco, I selected Captain Mackie (then lieutenant) to command a party from the troops under my command, to descend the hill and harass a column of the enemy ascending to the attack; this service was conducted by him with a spirit and energy conspicuous to every person present.

The readiness with which he came forward, when an officer was called to lead the advance of the storming party at Ciudad Rodrigo, I believe you are acquainted with.

I had so very high an opinion of Captain Mackie's intelligence, that he attended me, in the capacity of Aide-de-Camp, during the period I commanded a brigade in the third division, on the Peninsula, and particularly at the battle of Salamanca, where I had every reason to be much satisfied with his conduct; and in every situation of danger, he was always ready and anxious to make himself conspicuous; his activity and intelligence, on all occasions, was repeatedly noticed to me by the late Sir Thomas Picton in terms of the highest satisfaction, and I am sure Sir Thomas Picton was anxious that he should have received some special mark of favour, with the other officers, after the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, but he, at that time, succeeded to a company as the senior Lieutenant in his own regiment, which may have prevented him

from receiving any particular mark of favour at that time, and, I presume, Captain Mackie is in hopes of a favourable result to his memorial in consequence of these circumstances.

I beg again to apologise for the trouble I give you, and am, dear Sir,

Your faithful and humble Servant,

(Signed) J. A Wallace, M.G.

To Lieut.-General Sir James Kempt, G.C.B., &c.

END OF VOL. I.

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